



(from left to right)

Phillip Lipsy

Associate Professor of Political Science & Director of the Centre for the Study of Global Japan, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto

Ito Takako

Consul-General of Japan in Toronto

Tiff Macklem

Dean, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto

EVENT REPORT — A Symposium for International Women's Day 2020

Innovations in Advancing Gender Equality

Diversity and Inclusion in STEM/STEAM, Gender Equality in Post-secondary Institutions, and Gender Equality at a Global Scale

A special symposium to commemorate this year's International Women's Day was held at the University of Toronto on Mar. 3. Entitled "Innovations in Advancing Gender Equality," it brought together a distinguished group of scholars, policymakers, and business leaders who are at the forefront of studying and promoting gender equality. The event highlighted innovative efforts to advance gender equality in Japan, Canada and in a global context, and was co-hosted by the Centre for the Study of Global Japan and the Rotman School of Management in collaboration with the Consul-General of Japan in Toronto.

After brief introductions by Professor Tiff Macklem, the Dean of the Rotman School, and Professor Phillip Lipsy, Director of the Centre for the Study of Global Japan, Professor Rie Kijima of the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy opened the event, noting that "While both Canada and Japan have made important progress in gender equality, much work remains to be done."

Professor Sonia Kang of the Rotman School kicked off the substantive discussion by criticizing common myths about inclusion and diversity, such as the idea that women need to change by "leaning in," which put the onus for change on women. Instead, organizations must design for equality by focusing on behavioral guidelines and create accountability for their diversity goals. Mr. Kan Daisuke, the Executive Director of Cheerio Corporation, described how he spearheaded diversity initiatives in his company. Under his leadership, Cheerio became the first Japanese company to support the Tokyo Rainbow Parade. Professor Kijima spoke of her work to empower the next generation of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) thinkers. She shared her innovative learning intervention that utilizes design thinking to foster greater creative confidence and increased interest in STEAM topics among adolescent female students in Japan.

Professor Elizabeth Buckner of the U of T and Professor Okada Aya of Nagoya University, Japan, examined efforts to achieve gender equality in higher education. Professor Buckner discussed the lack of women in tenure-track positions, explaining how women are not fully represented in academia. Professor Aya also pointed out the underrepresentation of women in Japanese academia but highlighted how Nagoya University has implemented a forward-looking HeForShe initiative to promote gender equality.

Ms. Stephanie Dei, UN Women National Coordinator of WE EMPOWER Canada, discussed how the international community is fostering a culture where everyone is treated equally regardless of gender, addressing the gender pay gap, and promoting more women and minorities in the workplace. Mr. Edward Wageni, the Program Manager for UN Women HeForShe, described global efforts led by the United Nations to raise awareness of gender equality among men and create allies to facilitate the empowerment of women.

Ms. Ito Takako, the first female Consul-General of Japan in Toronto, provided closing remarks, noting that "This year's symposium has significant importance as it marks the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995, which was the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women." She also touched upon the conference called WAW! (World Assembly for Women), hosted by Japan five times since 2014. "Achieving 'A Society where Women Shine' continues to be one of the priority issues of Prime Minister Abe and his Administration. Having many leading figures from all over the world in this conference, we hope to encourage active discussions on various women's issues including Women's empowerment."

The event attracted a large, engaged audience and fostered an active discussion about initiatives to move gender equality forward.



Sonia Kang

Canada Research Chair in Identity, Diversity, and Inclusion; Associate Professor, Organizational Behaviour & HR management, University of Toronto



Rie Kijima

Assistant Professor, Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto

“ In order to make progress toward inclusion, we need to dismiss myths that hold us back, and turn instead to structural and systemic solutions ”

Sonia Kang



Kan Daisuke

Executive Director, Cheerio Corporation

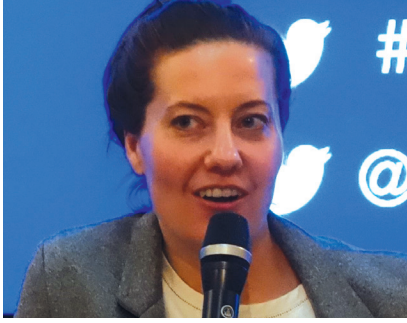


Stephanie Dei

UN Women National Coordinator of WE EMPOWER Canada

“ If you ask people to work for your organizational goals, I think it's very important for each and every one of them to feel accepted ”

Kan Daisuke



Elizabeth Buckner

Assistant Professor, Higher Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto



Edward Wageni

UN Women HeForShe Program Manager

“ We really tried to think about the factors that matter and shape cross-national differences as a starting point for thinking about what reforms might be necessary ”

Elizabeth Buckner



“ Our university changed regulations this year to increase the representation of women in its Education and Research Council ”

Okada Aya

Professor, Graduate school of International Development and Former Vice Trustee, Nagoya University

