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Overview of Project History and Activities

In the spring of 1992, IIE's Vice President for Education and the Arts held several advisory meetings in New York, Washington, and Boston with women of local and national prominence in order to identify issues for the Dialogue and to help identify possible candidates for the US delegation. In July 1992, IIE and JCIE held a planning meeting in New York to establish the overall framework of the project. Although the project as originally conceived by IIE was meant to provide opportunities for women leaders in the academic, government, and private sectors to meet and discuss issues facing women, JCIE suggested concentrating the focus more specifically on the nongovernmental sector. Since women in both Japan and the United States are a major force for societal change through their activities in voluntary and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and since little attention has been given to exchanges and dialogue among women in the private voluntary sector, JCIE suggested that a more innovative and fruitful dialogue would give greater emphasis to the role women play in societal change through activities in the nonprofit or independent sector, rather than a more general discussion of women's issues in the two societies. IIE readily agreed to this more focused theme of the Dialogue.

This meeting was followed by a series of consultations held in Japan by JCIE with Japanese women leaders and representatives from nonprofit and women's organizations likely to serve as hosts of local programs. The consultations resulted in the selection of institutions in Yokohama, Fukuoka, and Kanazawa to serve as local hosts for the US delegation.

With the more concentrated focus of the Dialogue, IIE began its national recruitment effort in October, 1992, targeting women based at NGOs covering a broad range of social issues. Over 250 letters were sent to various organizations requesting nominations for the Dialogue. By the November 20 deadline, IIE had received the nominations/applications of 42 women, each a leader in her local community.

After consultation with JCIE, IIE selected six women to serve on the US delegation to visit Japan in January, 1993. The delegation members were selected based

on their own outstanding personal qualifications in addition to considerations of geographic, ethnic, and professional diversity. The women leaders selected for the US delegation were:

Ronne Hartfield
Director of Museum Education, Art Institute of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Ruth Hinerfeld
Former President, National League of Women Voters
Larchmont, New York

Elizabeth Humstone
Director for Community Stewardship, The Countryside Institute
Burlington, Vermont

Irene Redondo-Churchward
Executive Director, Project Info Community Services
Los Angeles, California

Susan Virnig
Founder and Senior Consultant, Northwest Regional Facilitators
Spokane, Washington

Bernarda Wong
Executive Director, Chinese American Service League
Chicago, Illinois

The delegation, led by Peggy Blumenthal, IIE's Vice President for Educational Services, visited Japan for two weeks, from January 23 to February 5. Accompanying the delegation on the Japan study tour were: Hideko Katsumata, Executive Secretary, JCIE; Shaun Martin, Manager of Asia/Pacific Programs, IIE; Mio Ohta, Program Officer, JCIE; and Terumi Takenaka, Program Officer, JCIE. A staff member of CGP's New York office, who accompanied the delegation during the entire visit, was joined by staff members of CGP's Tokyo office in each of the cities visited on the study tour.

The study tour began in Tokyo with briefings on the current status of women in Japan by women professionals in academia, business, and government. The delegation then traveled to Yokohama, Fukuoka, and Kanazawa, for meetings with women's groups and community leaders, and site visits to NGOs and places of cultural significance. The tour ended in Tokyo with a workshop that brought together the US delegation members and women leaders from various regions throughout Japan. The delegation members discussed their experiences in Japan and their impressions of Japanese society, NGOs, and the women who have become an important ingredient for social change in the country.

Upon returning to the United States, IIE staff and the six members of the US delegation immediately began preparations for the visit of the reciprocal delegation

of Japanese women leaders. Drawing upon what they had learned about Japanese women and NGOs, the US delegation members arranged for meetings with women leaders of their respective communities and site visits to outstanding organizations, which would represent the diversity of activities carried out by NGOs in the United States and could serve as models for Japanese organizations in their efforts to become more effective in their respective missions.

Members of the Japanese delegation were recruited by JCIE based upon recommendations from women's centers, citizens groups, opinion leaders, and others in various regions of Japan. After an initial screening and interview process, the following six delegates were selected to participate in the program:

Yoshiko Hayakawa

Editor-in-Chief, *Ishikawa no Tamago* (Eggs in Ishikawa)

Kanazawa

Yoriko Imasato

Editor-in-Chief, *Living Fukuoka*, West Japan Living Newspaper Company

Fukuoka

Haruko Numata

Coordinator, Suginami Association for Better Lives in an Aging Society, Association to Provide Friendship Lights

Tokyo

Yaeko Suzuki

Chairman, We Love Asia 21

Yokohama

Mitsuko Yamaguchi

Executive Director, Fusae Ichikawa Memorial Association/Women's Suffrage Institute

Tokyo

Kimie Yokoyama

Director, Workers Collective "Des Femmes"

Yokohama

The group visited the United States on a two-week study tour, from June 6-19, 1993, led by Hideko Katsumata, Executive Secretary at the Japan Center for International Exchange. They were accompanied by Mieko Iijima, Program Assistant, JCIE; and Shaun Martin, Manager, Asia/Pacific Programs, IIE. Joining the group for a portion of the tour were Peggy Blumenthal, Vice-President for Educational Services, IIE; Karyn Wilcox, JCIE New York; and Yoo Fukazawa, Center for Global Partnership, New York.

The study tour began in Los Angeles with briefings by academics and government leaders on the current situation of women and NGOs in the United States and in the Los Angeles area. The group then traveled to Spokane, Chicago, and New

York for continued meetings and site visits. A final workshop, held at IIE's New York headquarters, brought together all 12 program participants to discuss their experiences, issues of common concern, and how women in both countries may continue to build networks and exchange ideas in the future. At the final workshop, several additional women leaders joined the discussion, including Susan Berresford, Vice President of the Ford Foundation, who gave a keynote address on the role of philanthropy in supporting NGOs and emerging women leaders.

Detailed Summary of the US Women Leaders' Japan Study Tour Activities

January 23–February 5, 1993

The delegation of six US women leaders visited four cities during their two-week stay in Japan: Tokyo, Yokohama, Fukuoka, and Kanazawa (for a list of participant names see page 4). In each of these cities, the delegation members visited local women's centers and community groups where they exchanged views on issues facing their respective communities, measures US and Japanese NGOs have taken to address these issues, and the role of women as a force for social change at the community, regional, and national levels. The goal of these meetings was to create an ongoing dialogue, highlighting areas of mutual concern shared by Japanese women and their US counterparts, and the fundamental differences in the situations faced by the two groups. Brief descriptions of the organizations visited in each of these cities are outlined below.

Tokyo, January 23–26

The study tour began in Tokyo, the nation's bustling political, commercial, and cultural capital. Here the participants were briefed on current issues facing Japan, Japanese women, and Japanese nonprofit organizations (NPOs) by prominent women (and a few men) in government, business, the media, academia, and the nongovernmental sector. The delegation also visited the HELP Asian Women's Shelter and stopped at the *Sensoji* Temple in Asakusa on a brief sightseeing break. At a reception hosted by CGP, the delegation had the opportunity to meet many CGP staffmembers and learn more about their programs and interests.

HELP Asian Women's Shelter (The House in Emergency of Love and Peace):

HELP is a women's shelter that provides refuge, counseling, and legal services to women from many countries, particularly those from Southeast Asia, who have found themselves trapped working in the Japanese sex-related industry. Facilities at the center include single and double rooms, a dining room, kitchen, bath, and a children's room. In 1991 HELP provided shelter for 332 women and received telephone inquiries from over 2,000 individuals seeking advice on a wide range of problems.

Yokohama, January 27–28

Following their stay in Tokyo, the group moved on to the nearby port city of Yokohama, which was one of the first cities in Japan open to the outside world.