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## 10 Young Female Leaders from Tohoku's Disaster Regions visit Los Angeles for Entrepreneur Training (Feb. 2018)

Specified non-profit Women's Eye (Executive Director: Megumi Ishimoto) will carry out its first Los Angeles training as part of the Grassroots Academy Tohoku. From February 4 – 11, 2018, ten young female leaders from Japan's disaster regions (Miyagi, Iwate, and Fukushima) and four staff from Women's Eye will visit Los Angeles. They will learn directly from female social entrepreneurs, leaders of nonprofits, and businesspeople how to overcome problems, create innovation, and sustain their activities, returning to Japan on February 12. They will also visit Los Angeles City Hall, meet with Japanese Americans, and hold a panel discussion with representatives of the Red Cross and other disaster specialists to convey their experiences of Japan's 2011 disasters. Our intention is for young women working to improve the disaster areas to increase their skills, knowledge of business continuity, and influence in their regions.

This training has been made possible thanks to the generosity of J.P. Morgan and the TOMODACHI Initiative.

### <Background and Issues>

[The TOMODACHI NGO Leadership Program](#), supported by J.P. Morgan, is a multi-year commitment to support capacity development of Japanese NGOs building upon the lessons of the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. From October 27 to November 9, 2013, ten nonprofit leaders from Japan's disaster regions participated in J.P. Morgan and the [TOMODACHI NPO Leadership Program's Study Tour](#) in San Francisco and Seattle. One of them was Megumi Ishimoto, Executive Director of Women's Eye. After her return to Japan, on November 25, she organized women living in temporary disaster housing in the town of Minamisanriku, Miyagi Prefecture, to [meet former US Ambassador to Japan Caroline Kennedy](#), who was visiting the town. Following this, in March 2015, as a pre-event of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, Women's Eye held the International Grassroots Women's Academy in Tohoku in Minamisanriku. Fifteen women from ten countries and forty women from Japan's disaster regions participated.

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, adopted at the Third UN World Conference, states that "female and youth leadership should be promoted". Inspired by this message, Women's Eye established the [Grassroots Academy Tohoku](#) program, which helps develop young female leaders in Japan's disaster regions involved in regional development and social entrepreneurship. Since the program's inception in February 2015, we have held seven events with a total of 160 participants, building a network of female practitioners in Japan's disaster regions. In order to realize the Sendai Framework's goal of promoting female and youth leadership, it is necessary to provide people with the skills and support network to overcome the disaster regions' deeply entrenched gender norms and the attendant difficulties faced by women working there. These issues have been raised both by Academy participants and the more than 8000 women who have participated in Women's Eye's lectures. The Grassroots Academy Tohoku program is focused on resolving these two issues by developing both the next generation of female leaders that will change the region and the social entrepreneurs who will sustain these changes.

## Press Release



On this occasion, thanks to the generous support of J.P. Morgan and the TOMODACHI Initiative, who provided leadership training to our own Executive Director shortly after she established Women's Eye, we are bringing young female leaders from Japan's disaster regions to Los Angeles, where they will deepen their understanding of innovation.

### <J.P. Morgan's Work in Japan>

In Japan, J.P. Morgan provides financial services through JPMorgan Securities Japan Co., Ltd., JPMorgan Chase Bank N.A., Tokyo Branch, and JPMorgan Asset Management (Japan) Limited. These services include investment banking; securities, stock, and foreign exchange; fund settlement and trade finance; asset management; and asset utilization. Through a grant from the JPMorgan Chase & Co. foundation, J.P. Morgan's corporate responsibility activities support various non-profit organizations and a wide range of employee volunteer activities. They have been providing support in Japan's disaster regions since the 2011 catastrophe. For more information, see:

[www.jpmorgan.co.jp](http://www.jpmorgan.co.jp)

### <TOMODACHI Initiative>

The TOMODACHI Initiative is a public-private partnership with the Japanese government, born out of support for Japan's recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake, which invests in the next generation of Japanese and American leaders through educational and cultural exchanges as well as leadership programs. We seek to foster a "TOMODACHI generation" of young American and Japanese leaders who are committed to and engaged in strengthening U.S.-Japan relations, appreciate each other's countries and cultures, and possess the global skills and mindsets needed to contribute to and thrive in a more cooperative, prosperous, and secure world.

For more details, please see the TOMODACHI Initiative website:

<http://usjapantomodachi.org/ja/>

### <Grassroots Academy Tohoku>

The Grassroots Academy Tohoku is a space for gathering next generation female leaders from Tohoku's 3 prefectures (Miyagi, Iwate, Fukushima) and encouraging their development through mutual learning and sharing experiences. The program began in March 2015 with the International Grassroots Women's Academy in Tohoku, held in Minamisanriku Town with the support of the Huairou Commission.

In February 2015's pre-event training we were delighted to host Akiko Domoto, who has long promoted women's initiatives. In February of 2016, we were joined in Iwate by the famous American seismologist Lucy Jones, and in August by Osaki Asako, director of Plan International Japan and an expert on gender. These guests provided support and encouragement for the young female participants. Dr. Lucy Jones Center for Science and Society has provided input on-aspects of this Los Angeles training. To date 81 people have participated in our programs.

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