

PUBLIC EVENT

WOMEN AND THEIR ROLE IN CREATING PEACEFUL SOCIETIES AND IN PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM

TRANSFORMING GENDER SOCIAL NORMS THROUGH COMEDY: FIGHTING TERRORISM ONE LAUGH AT A TIME

1 March 2018, 18.30pm (Doors open at 18.00pm)
Venue: Sophia University, Sophia Tower (BLDG-
No.6) 1st floor, Yotsuya Campus Tokyo, Japan

As the internet becomes more accessible, the online space has become the new battleground for influencing the ideologies of young people. Young people are reported to watch 2.5 times more content on social media than they do on TV, and in Asian countries, YouTube viewership is more than doubling each year. The rise of new platforms and the proliferation of mobile devices has meant that social-media based videos are more than a form of amusement or a way to pass time. They have become a primary means to communicate and connect people. They have also become a driving force for extremist groups to win the support of new recruits.

Comedy is the most shareable form of content. Numerous studies document how young people are most likely to share content on social media

that is funny and least likely to share content that is political. Well known comedians have massive online followings and are a powerful vehicle for discussing topics that are considered too dry or too sensitive for public discussion. When the mouth is open for laughter, it can be an opportunity to throw in some food for thought.

Female comedians in particular are proving to be a major driving force for social change in the region and the way Asian society sees women. Their influence will only continue to grow as access to the internet increases.

Under the programme “Empowered Women, Peaceful Communities” supported by the Government of Japan, UN Women has been working with female comedians in South Asia and

South East Asia to develop sketches that challenge the narratives used by violent extremist groups, using new forms of media to counter extremist ideology in the onlinespace.

To showcase this work, a reception will be held where the videos will be shown, together with performances that capture the power of comedy to promote positive gender norms and peaceful messages.

AGENDA

MC: Ms. Minori Takao, Anchor, NHK World

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| 18.00-18.30 | Registration | |
| 18.30-18.40 | Opening performance “Japanese Calligraphy meets Augmented Reality” | Ms. Yuuna Okanishi , Calligrapher and Performer Mr. Takashi Matsunaga , Pianist |
| 18.40-18.50 | Welcome remarks | Mr. Iwao Horii , Parliamentary Vice-Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (TBC) |
| 18.50-19.00 | “Empowered Women, Peaceful Communities” An introduction to the Programme funded by the Government of Japan and a brief reflection on the use of comedy to transform gender social norms | Dr. Miwa Kato , Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific |
| 19.00-19.20 | Video presentations and discussion Presentation of two Youtube videos led by female comedian influencers dealing with the topic of women’s involvement in violent extremism | Mr. Priyank Mathur and female comedy performers from India and Indonesia |
| 19.20-19.30 | Closing Performance “Gender Equality and Peace” | PIKOTARO , Goodwill Ambassador for Promoting the SDGs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan |
| 19.30-19.40 | Closing remarks | Dr. Yoshiaki Terumichi , President, Sophia University |
| 19.45-20.00 | Speakers’ conversation with the press (upon registration) | |