

World Social Work Day 2019 Symposium Held in Tokyo

The Japanese Federation of Social Workers (JFSW) hosted a symposium on March 23rd (Sat) at the historical campus of Japan Women's University in Tokyo to commemorate World Social Work Day 2019. The event was co-hosted by the Japanese Association for the Study of International Social Work. *Rights of Migrant Workers and Social Work* was chosen as the topic. The event was facilitated by Prof. Mariko Kimura of Japan Women's University, Chairperson of the International Committee at JFSW, and four presenters were invited to the stage to speak and have a discussion.

First, Prof. Kimura explained that as Japan is trying to dramatically expand its migrant workforce, we have to focus on social support and mental health needs beyond superficial measures such as Japanese language training and mere provision of information. Mr. Norman Nakamura, Representative of the Multicultural Activities Network Council, pointed out that the role of social workers is to provide support in a way that they listen to and think together with each and every client individually to find the best choice for that person by considering their future.

Mr. Frank Ocampos, a social worker at Family Center Viola at No no Hana no Ie, is engaged in practice in children and family services. He stated empowerment through the relationship with the worker as the main issue for women and children who cannot speak Japanese and are in stress. Ms. Li Hanin, Ph.D. Candidate at Japan Women's University, delivered a report on migrant care workers in Taiwan and how better communication with Taiwanese staff, better understanding by supervisors, and OJT opportunities contributed to their stable employment. Finally, Ms. Kosmo Ban, a counsellor at Maternal and Child Home Casa de Santa Maria, presented about the activities of Multicultural Support Centers and other tendencies in immigration policy in Korea. These policies clearly exist as a response to low birth rates and population ageing in the country.

As one of the speakers mentioned in the final comments, social workers alone cannot protect the rights of migrant workers. However, it is important to collect successful cases and to advocate for concrete measures in partnership with other professionals.