

# Reimagining the U.S.-Japan Friendship: Connecting Civil Society Across the Pacific

April 15, 2026

**Program** Full biographies for all symposium speakers and panelists are available at the end of the leaflet.

## 15:00-15:10 Opening Remarks

MC **Izumi Tanaka** (Representative Director of IZMiN Inc.)  
**Lawrence K. Fish** (Chair, United States-Japan Foundation (USJF))  
**Jacob M. Schlesinger** (President & CEO, USJF)  
**Tomoyuki Watanabe** (Founder & Representative Director, A Better Future Foundation;  
formerly Vice President & Managing Director - Grants and Japan, USJF)

## 15:10-15:35 Panel 1: Bolstering the Social Impact Ecosystem in the Current U.S.-Japan Climate

Moderator **Haruto Okabe** (Japan Representative, USJF)  
Panelists **Masataka Uo** (Founder and CEO, Japan Fundraising Association)  
**Katsuji Imata** (President, Social Impact Management Initiative Japan;  
Co-CEO, Blue Marble Japan)  
**Sakae Suzuki** (Representative Director and CEO, Social Innovation Partners)

Ask Questions via Slido  
(日本語でも構いません)



## 15:35-16:00 Panel 2: Rethinking Classic Exchange Programs for Social Impact

Moderator **Jacob M. Schlesinger**  
Panelists **Naho Kawashima** (Social Innovation Coordinator, ETIC.)  
**Shoji Tsuboyama** (Director, International House of Japan)  
**Chris Morrison** (President, Japan Culture Center of Western New York; Representative from  
Buffalo-Kanazawa winner of USJF/Sister Cities International U.S.-Japan Global Impact Grant)

## 16:00-16:15 Panel 3: Impact in Action – the Kesenuma Example and Possible Next Steps

Moderator **Jacob M. Schlesinger**  
Panelists **Tomoyuki Watanabe**  
**Yukio Takasu** (President, Human Security Forum; Chairperson, Japan Committee for UNICEF;  
Special Adviser, UN Secretary-General on Human Security)

## 16:15-16:35 Break

## 16:35-17:00 Panel 4: Building Social Impact Muscles on the Ground in Japan

Moderator **Haruto Okabe**  
Panelists **Hiroshi Nakamura** (Professor and Dean, Graduate School of Business Administration, Keio  
Business School, Keio University)  
**Taro Tanaka** (Global Legal Officer, LEDGE)  
**Hiromi Murakami** (Founder, Japan Institute for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship)

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### 17:00-17:25 **Panel 5: Impact-Driven Finance to Address Social Challenges**

Moderator **Haruto Okabe**  
Panelists **Kensuke Onishi** (Founder, Peace Winds Japan)  
**Tomomi Ishida** (Co-founder, ImpactShare)  
**Tomohiro Nagasaki** (Senior Manager, Equity Investment Department, Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Bank)  
**Aiko Kozaki** (Director, Investment Division, Japan Network for Public Interest Activities)

Ask Questions via Slido  
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### 17:25-17:50 **Panel 6: Shared Challenges**

Moderator **Jacob M. Schlesinger**  
Panelists **Sachiko Kita** (Representative Director, Institute of Trauma Recovery)  
**Mika Yakushi** (Founder and Representative Director, ReBit)  
**Maiko Ichihara** (Professor, Graduate School of Law and the School of International and Public Policy, Hitotsubashi University)

### 17:50-17:55 **Closing Remarks**

**Haruto Okabe**

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### 18:30-21:00 **Reception**

Aisatsu **Taro Kono** (Member of the House of Representatives; USJLP inaugural class of 2000; Former Trustee, USJF)  
**Tomoyuki Watanabe**  
Kanpai **Ichiro Fujisaki** (President, The America-Japan Society of Japan)

## About the United States–Japan Foundation

The United States–Japan Foundation (USJF) is an independent philanthropic organization dedicated to strengthening bilateral ties and addressing shared challenges. Since its founding in 1980, USJF has supported diverse initiatives through over \$100 million in grants in both countries. Today, alongside its grant programs, USJF oversees the US–Japan Leadership Program (USJLP), a network connecting over 500 leaders from both nations.



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# Speakers Biographies



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## MC

### Izumi Tanaka

Izumi Tanaka is the Representative Director of IZMiN Inc. and an anchor and interviewer specializing in business and policy discussions. She began her career at NHK, Japan's public broadcaster, where she spent nine years as an anchor and reporter on flagship programs, covering major domestic and international issues.

Now independent, she moderates high-profile corporate events and contributes to leading economic media. She also serves as an outside director of a listed company. With a Master of Public Policy, she brings analytical insight to conversations at the intersection of business, policy, and society.

## Remarks

### Lawrence K. Fish

Lawrence K. Fish is the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the United States-Japan Foundation. He is the former Chairman and CEO of Citizens Financial Group, Inc., which grew 30-fold into a top-10 U.S. bank holding company during his 17-year tenure. He currently chairs the Fish Family Foundation and Bridge Over Troubled Waters, a nonprofit serving at-risk youth.

A Trustee Emeritus of the MIT Corporation and Fellow of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences, he has held numerous leadership roles, including Director of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston and Chairman of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. He holds an M.B.A. from Harvard and several honorary doctorates. He resides in Boston with his wife, Atsuko.

## Moderators

### Jacob M. Schlesinger

Jacob M. Schlesinger joined the United States-Japan Foundation in 2023 as President & CEO following a 30-year career at The Wall Street Journal, where he served as Tokyo bureau chief and deputy Washington bureau chief. He has covered major global events ranging from the 9/11 attacks to Japan's 2011 triple disaster. A Pulitzer Prize winner and recipient of Stanford's Shorenstein Journalism Award, he is the author of *Shadow Shoguns*. He has held fellowships at Stanford and the University of Chicago, focusing on economic policy and challenges to democracy. He holds a BA in economics from Harvard and lives in Washington with his wife, Louisa Rubinfiel.

### Haruto Okabe

Haruto Okabe serves as the Japan Representative for the United States-Japan Foundation, where he leads the Foundation's Japan strategy to strengthen the social impact ecosystem. He previously worked at Bain & Company in Tokyo and Dubai, advising on management and social impact initiatives. He holds a Master's in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School and a BA in International Relations from the University of Tokyo. A dedicated nonprofit leader, he serves as a Director of CLACK and volunteers with Social Venture Partners Tokyo. He is based in Tokyo and enjoys cooking and visiting Shinjuku Gyoen.

## **Panel 1: Bolstering the Social Impact Ecosystem in the Current U.S.-Japan Climate**

### **Masataka Uo**

Masataka Uo is the founder and CEO of the Japan Fundraising Association, a national network promoting philanthropy and social impact investment in Japan. He established the association after 17 years of service at the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the International Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. He also serves as Japan Advisor to AVPN, Asia's largest network of over 700 funders, Vice-Chair of the GSG Impact Japan National Partners formed at the G8 London Summit, Vice President and Director of the Center for Impact Economy at Shizenkan Graduate School, and Editor-in-Chief of the Stanford Social Innovation Review Japan Edition. He recently founded Japan Impact Institute on the foundation of Japan Fundraising Association as a leading hub for social innovation and impact.

### **Katsuji Imata**

Katsuji Imata is President of the Social Impact Management Initiative Japan (SIMI) and Co-CEO of Blue Marble Japan, an evaluation consulting firm focused on developmental evaluation. With over 25 years of experience, he has worked across the United States, Japan, and South Africa at the intersection of civil society and systemic change.

His work centers on advancing impact management and evaluation as tools for building more just and sustainable societies. He also serves in leadership roles across Japan's impact ecosystem, including with the Japan Impact Consortium, Japan Evaluation Society, JANPIA, and JICA, as well as international initiatives on social and financial disclosure.

### **Sakae Suzuki**

Sakae Suzuki is Representative Director and CEO of Social Innovation Partners (SIP), a nonprofit organization supporting the growth and impact of social enterprises in Japan. He transitioned to the social sector in 2019 after a career in corporate strategy and investment.

Previously, he was Managing Director at KKR Capstone, where he supported value creation at portfolio companies, and a Partner at McKinsey & Company, advising on operational improvement and global strategy. His earlier experience includes roles in healthcare consulting, startups, and corporate management.

He serves on multiple nonprofit boards and holds a Ph.D. in chemistry from the California Institute of Technology.

## **Panel 2: Rethinking Classic Exchange Programs for Social Impact**

### **Naho Kawashima**

Naho Kawashima is a Social Innovation Coordinator at ETIC. - Entrepreneurial Training for Innovative Communities - one of Japan's largest networks of social entrepreneurs and ecosystem builders. Since she joined ETIC. in 2020, she has played a key role in launching ETIC.'s first international team. Currently, she oversees the development of Japan-U.S. Social Innovation Network (JUSSIN), a bilateral platform that connects social sector leaders from both countries to address complex, shared challenges through mutual learning. Through a culturally sensitive and inclusive approach to empowering individuals and building multi-sectoral partnerships, she fosters mutual understanding among diverse stakeholders and helps leaders at all stages unlock their entrepreneurial potential.

## **Shoji Tsuboyama**

25+ year career in Investment Banking (Salomon Brothers, UBS) with extensive experience in advising large corporate issuers and institutional investors on both Public and Private capital market transactions spanning the entire capitalization spectrum from Debt to Equity. In 2018, co-founded CapitaLink Partners, a financial and investment advisory firm based in Tokyo.

Researcher on a wide range of Capital Markets topics, including a Visiting Scholar position at UC Berkeley Haas School of Business (~July 2024), and a Fellow appointment at University of Tokyo Center for Advanced Capital Markets Research (Present).

Received a BS in Urban Engineering from University of Tokyo in 1988 and an MBA from Harvard Business School in 1996.

## **Chris Morrison**

Christopher Morrison is President of the Japan Culture Center of Western New York, where he leads cultural exchange initiatives and community engagement programs connecting Japan and the United States. He has expanded the organization's outreach, partnerships, and membership, while serving as a key liaison for sister city relations between Buffalo and Kanazawa.

In addition to his nonprofit leadership, he works as a technical writer, translator, and communications specialist, supporting corporate and cross-cultural projects in Japan. His background spans education, media, and international exchange, with a focus on building connections across communities.

He holds a B.A. in Asian Studies from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

## **Panel 3: Impact in Action – the Kesenuma Example and Possible Next Steps**

### **Tomoyuki Watanabe**

Tomoyuki Watanabe previously served as the Japan Representative and Vice President & Managing Director - Grants and Japan of the United States-Japan Foundation and Deputy Program Director for the U.S.-Japan Leadership Program. He began his career at Asahi Glass in international human resources before serving as HR Director and Board Member at SC Johnson Japan. His extensive background in executive search includes leadership roles at Egon Zehnder International and DHR International. A dedicated leader in the non-profit sector, he was a founding member of the Institute for Strategic Leadership (ISL), where he remains an active core member. He holds an M.B.A. from Harvard Business School.

He is most recently Founder and Representative Director of A Better Future Foundation, an 一般財団法人 (General Incorporated Foundation), which is scheduled to be registered in April/May.

### **Yukio Takasu**

Yukio Takasu is President of the Human Security Forum, Chairperson of the Japan Committee for UNICEF, and Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on Human Security. He has been a leading advocate for advancing the human security approach in addressing global challenges, including the Sustainable Development Goals.

A career diplomat, he served as Japan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations and held senior roles in multilateral diplomacy, including Under-Secretary-General for Management and UN Controller at the United Nations. He has also held academic appointments at the University of Tokyo and other institutions.

## **Panel 4: Building Social Impact Muscles on the Ground in Japan**

### **Hiroshi Nakamura**

Hiroshi Nakamura is Professor and Dean of the Graduate School of Business Administration at Keio Business School, Keio University, and a faculty member of the Graduate School of Medicine. His research focuses on industrial organization in the life sciences and healthcare sectors, healthcare policy, diversity management, and R&D management.

He serves as a trustee of the Health Care Science Institute and the Japan Health Economics Association, and has held key advisory roles with Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, including within the Central Social Insurance Medical Council (Chuikyo). He also co-founded KEIO LEAP, a nonprofit leadership program supported by the United States-Japan Foundation.

He received his Ph.D. from Stanford University.

### **Taro Tanaka**

Taro Tanaka serves as Global Legal Officer (part-time) at LEDGE while practicing as a Partner at Miura & Partners. He brings firsthand experience in international human rights, having worked with the United Nations in both Geneva and New York, as well as with international NGOs in Cox's Bazar. He earned his LL.M. from NYU School of Law as a Fulbright Scholar.

### **Hiromi Murakami**

Hiromi Murakami is Adjunct Associate Professor of Political Science at Temple University Japan Campus and a Visiting Scholar at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS). Her work focuses on international relations, public policy, and global health, with particular expertise in U.S.–Japan policy collaboration and crisis management.

She has held leadership roles at the Health and Global Policy Institute (HGPI) and served as Adjunct Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). She is also founder of the Japan Institute for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship and co-founder of Guardian Inc., a technology initiative addressing bullying and abuse.

She received her Ph.D. in International Relations from Johns Hopkins University SAIS.

## **Panel 5: Impact-Driven Finance to Address Social Challenges**

### **Kensuke Onishi**

Kensuke Onishi is the founder of Peace Winds Japan, a leading humanitarian organization through which he has directed emergency relief operations in over 40 countries, including Iraq, Afghanistan, and Ukraine.

He has played a central role in shaping Japan's humanitarian infrastructure, contributing to the establishment of Japan Platform and founding the Asia Pacific Alliance for Disaster Management (A-PAD) to strengthen regional disaster response cooperation. He also launched the ARROWS initiative to enhance emergency medical support during disasters.

In addition to his international work, he is engaged in regional revitalization and animal welfare initiatives in Japan. He studied conflict resolution and humanitarian intervention at the University of Bradford.

## **Tomomi Ishida**

Tomomi Ishida is an investment professional focused on climate tech and impact investing. She is currently an Investment Associate and Impact Officer at Energy & Environment Investment, a venture capital firm specializing in climate technology, where she leads investment sourcing, portfolio support, and impact strategy development.

Her experience spans strategy consulting and international development, including roles at EY Parthenon and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), where she worked on private-sector partnerships and sustainability initiatives. She is also co-founder of ImpactShare, a media platform for impact investing professionals.

She holds an MBA from the University of Cambridge and a CFA Certificate in ESG Investing.

## **Tomohiro Nagasaki**

Tomohiro Nagasaki works at the intersection of business and sustainability. He is currently a Senior Manager, Equity Investment Department at Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Bank in Tokyo, where he leads the origination and execution of equity investments in areas including decarbonization and food & agriculture that generate both financial returns and positive social and environmental impact. Previously, Tomohiro spent nearly a decade working in emerging markets. He served at the African Development Bank in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, focusing on agriculture finance, and at the United Nations Development Programme in New York and Istanbul, where he advised leading corporates and social enterprises on impact measurement and management. Tomohiro holds a master's degree in international business and development economics from The Fletcher School at Tufts University, where he was a Fulbright Scholar.

## **Aiko Kozaki**

Aiko Kozaki leads the Investment Division at JANPIA, a nonprofit organization designated to utilize dormant deposits in Japan, where they focus on developing an impact-first investment market. They bring extensive experience in sustainable finance and ESG investing across the public and private sectors.

They previously worked at Japan's Financial Services Agency (FSA), contributing to the establishment of a sustainable finance team and related policy development, and spent nearly eight years at the Japan Research Institute supporting financial institutions in ESG strategy and product development. They have also been active in mentoring professionals and advancing gender diversity initiatives.

They hold a master's degree from the University of Pittsburgh and a bachelor's degree from Keio University.

## **Panel 6: Shared Challenges**

### **Sachiko Kita**

Sachiko Kita is Representative Director of the Institute of Trauma Recovery in Japan and Director of the Multicultural Study of Trauma Recovery (MiStory) Consortium in the United States. Her work focuses on gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence and child abuse, and on advancing holistic, survivor-centered approaches to trauma recovery.

With over 20 years of research experience, she has led international collaborations and developed evidence-based frameworks for trauma recovery, including the Trauma Recovery–Informed Practice model. Her recent work includes developing digital, AI-enabled platforms to support survivors and practitioners across countries.

## **Mika Yakushi**

Mika is Founder and Representative Director of ReBit, one of Japan's leading nonprofits addressing LGBTQ issues, and a Director of Pride House Tokyo, Japan's first LGBTQ community center. A certified social worker and mental health professional, he focuses on supporting youth, education, and career development.

He has delivered more than 2,200 trainings on LGBTQ and diversity issues, provided educational resources to schools, and advised companies and government agencies. His career support initiatives have reached over 12,000 individuals, and he launched Japan's first LGBTQ-inclusive welfare service to support employment for individuals with mental or developmental disabilities.

## **Maiko Ichihara**

Maiko Ichihara is a Professor in the Graduate School of Law and the School of International and Public Policy at Hitotsubashi University. She is also Director of the Democracy Advocates at Risk program and plays a leading role in regional and global democracy initiatives, including the East Asia Democracy Forum and multiple international policy networks.

Her research focuses on international relations, democracy support, Japanese foreign policy, and influence operations. She has been a prominent voice on issues such as disinformation and democratic resilience.

She received her Ph.D. in political science from George Washington University.

## **Reception**

### **Taro Kono**

Taro Kono is a Member of the House of Representatives of Japan, currently serving his eleventh term representing Kanagawa's 15th district. A graduate of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service, he has held a distinguished range of senior cabinet positions, including Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of Defense, and Minister for Digital Affairs. His policy leadership has been instrumental in shaping Japan's approach to national security, fiscal reform, and digital governance, as well as overseeing the nation's COVID-19 vaccine roll-out.

Beyond his legislative career, he has a long-standing relationship with the United States-Japan Foundation. He is a USJLP Fellow from the program's inaugural class of 2000 and served three terms as a member of the USJF Board of Trustees between 2008 and 2022. In addition to his public service, he has contributed to various cultural and sporting organizations, including serving as Chairman of the Japan Race Horse Association.

### **Ichiro Fujisaki**

Ichiro Fujisaki is currently President of the America-Japan Society of Japan. He had been a Japanese diplomat who served as ambassador to the United States from 2008 to 2012. Before that he was Ambassador to the United Nations and to the World Trade Organization in Geneva, serving as the chairman of the Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. His other Ministry of Foreign Affairs posts include terms as deputy director-general for Asian Affairs, political minister in the Embassy of Japan in Washington DC, director-general for North American Affairs before being appointed as the Deputy Foreign Minister. After his retirement, he served as a professor of Sophia University for 5 years. After that, he served as the President of Nakasone Peace Institute for 5 years until April 2023. He studied at Keio University, Brown University and Stanford University Graduate School.