
ASIA WOMEN LEADERS INTERVIEW

Representative of RAUL Inc, Mr.Kenji Eda 's Interview

Q1 What is environmental consulting?

Many companies don't know how to contribute to society in terms of the environment. For example: how to get involved in renewable energy such as solar and wind power generation, what kind of organizations to work with, how to publicize to the world, etc. We provide advice and support in these areas.

We also help companies that are decarbonizing and are on the path to becoming CO2-free. It is also important to spread knowledge of environmental aspects within the company, and I hope that this will lead to initiatives that support the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). It is also important to promote the company externally. Companies with a promising future in social contribution will be able to raise their stock prices and raise funds more easily if they are listed on a stock exchange. It is also easier to attract quality human resources. We advise them to take full advantage of the system that allows them to gain by contributing to society.

Specifically, for a real estate company client that has buildings all over Japan and wants to make them CO2-free in the future, we have provided full support for a project to make them CO2-free over 5 to 10 years, and for a client that operates fitness clubs all over Japan. We have also assisted clients that operate fitness clubs nationwide to make all of their facilities CO2-free.

Q2 It is amazing that you started your decarbonization efforts in 2005, 17 years ago. Can you tell us a little more about your initiatives?

I originally like to try difficult things that not many people are doing. The environment and energy fields are not an easy field to commercialize, but I was attracted to the fact that no one else was doing what I thought I needed to do at the time.

I also had the feeling that I could do it at my own pace because there was not much competition. Then the Great East Japan Earthquake happened, and I had no idea at the time that society would become much more interested in energy issues.

Q3: You said that you have published a considerable amount of books, but what kind of thoughts do you have in your writing activities?

I have written 20 books so far, and my dream is to live to be 100 years old, write 100 books, and influence a million people. I want to learn forever and have a positive influence on many people. But first, I want to live happily.

The beauty of writing books is that I am not influenced by anyone. When I try to make a profit, I am affected by the market environment, but writing a book itself is not affected at all. I feel that being able to work on it in a lighthearted manner suits my personality.

Q4 In Tonami, Toyama, you said you had the desire to become an inventor like Edison. What drives you to become as such? Also, what are your future plans, if any?

Is it the desire to challenge difficult things? The idea is to create "I wish I had it" that no one noticed. I thought that the field of environment and energy had no specific and clear-cut solution, and that I would never get tired of it, even if I spent my life in it.

I think to myself that I still have a long way to go to get to this point, and I have yet to see anyone in the industry who has a grasp of about 30% of the field, so I hope to get to that point in my lifetime.

Q5 I heard that you have your own morning routine. What kind of effect does it have on you?

I get up at 6:00 am. I can concentrate better in the morning, so I read various books and write down what I notice on a notepad, and then re-compose it depending on the day. In the morning, I often use it for my own output and to take care of my physical condition.

I find myself doing this for more than 5 years. I started writing my thoughts in notebooks in 2008. But when I was younger, it didn't have to be in the morning. However, it takes a lot of concentration, so these days I do it in the morning and try not to have morning appointments. This kind of daily routine helps me in my daily work and in writing books.

Q6 What do you think is your strength?

To start, let us first talk about my weakness: I do not belong to a large organization. Many people in the energy field, such as electric power and gas companies, have a background in government or academia, but I do not. However, because of this, I feel that I have been able to establish a position where I can easily say, "This is the way it should be". In an industry where the core ideas of large organizations have had a strong influence on its members, I feel that we are finally shifting to a stage where individuals are speaking up on their own.

The opinions of organizations tend to be strong, but I would like to place particular importance on the perspective of what Japan is doing as a whole.

I also work with the belief that it is important to go with the flow when things go wrong.

Q7 What are the challenges and problems in the industry?

Challenges change over time. In Europe and the United States, there is a growing social momentum to promote decarbonization, but in Japan, it is difficult to make a shift all at once. I would be happy if I could do a job that gives people incentives to get over this hurdle first, even though the goal cannot be reached all at once.

Q8 What advice would you give to women leaders around the world?

I like to eat many types of food, such as sushi, Italian food, and Indian food. I can express my preferences of food, while also connecting to people in the rest of the world. Do you see how this is also related to the topic of energy?

Even though we are connected to the world in the same way, we can express our preferences for food, but I don't think we can casually express our preferences for energy. I think it is important to first get people interested in the issue and then create an environment where people can casually talk about it, because a constructive solution can be reached by everyone having a casual conversation.

I don't think it is good to allow a structure where people with certain power make decisions on their own. It is the same as saying that we should not have a world that is biased toward Japanese food because there are great people who love Japanese food.

Perhaps it is my job to remove the atmosphere that makes it difficult to say things in the industry. In a conciliatory way (laughs).

Q9 Expanding your perspective to Asia, what are your thoughts on the current situation and the future?

I think there are many things that Japan can contribute to Asia in the field of environmental energy. In terms of direction, I believe that this will be an important field to further develop together with Asia. More and more countries are experiencing economic growth, such as India, the Philippines, and Indonesia. It is said that India's GDP will exceed Japan's by 2030, but this will cause serious environmental problems.

While supporting them because it is our right to be rich, Japan has a track record of overcoming the problems of environmental pollution and efforts to avoid CO2 emissions in the midst of economic growth. As a senior in life, I am sure that I can offer advice on not only technology but also rules and regulations so that I can pass them on to my junior colleagues who will grow up in the future.

Q10: Specifically, what kind of technology can be developed from Japan to Asia and the world?

As an example, we have paper-like solar panel technology. Transparent film is also available, so the time is approaching when we will be able to generate electricity by affixing it to windows. Iron emits a large amount of CO2 to make, but if it is made from plant-derived cellulose nanofiber, it can be as strong as iron with plant materials.

Ultimately, there is also technology to use CO2 to make concrete material. I believe that this is a genre of carbon recycling that could be deployed in Asia if the government supports its practical application. I hope that the technology that is being worked on in our country can also be used to solve environmental problems.

Q11 The environmental industry seems to be a male-dominated field. How do you perceive this situation?

I have given many lectures in the past and I can confirm that there are only a few women in the audience. However, there should be no difference between men and women in the use of energy, so women's participation is expected in the future. To do so, we need to reach out to each other regardless of gender. We need to respect opinions from the female side, and we need to have a united perspective that accepts differences on the male side.

Q12 Do you have any advice about nurturing the next generation?

For those who have never been involved in this industry before, I think it is an industry with high hurdles and invisible barriers. So I would like to make it possible for various people to discuss energy more freely and openly. I would like to create an atmosphere where not only women but also young people in their teens and twenties can speak up even if they don't know much about the subject, and I think it is important to have an environment where people can discuss various opinions, like their favorite food, rather than someone who knows 100 things telling 100 things. I think it is important. By doing so, I think each person will become more interested in the environment and energy, and it will also lead them to think about studying geothermal energy, and so on.

Q13 What is required of women leaders in such an era?

To provide a new perspective. The energy industry is said to be a male-dominated society, but it is important to take the direction that we should be able to create sustainable energy, not for someone to make money. I look forward to the involvement of women who can break through rigid perceptions. It takes a lot of hard work to break down the old, but I am also looking forward to the positive energy of moving toward the hope of the future. In Scandinavia, the current energy system was developed through discussions between men and women at energy conferences, and I hope that Japan can also create an environment where everyone can talk together. I believe that the era in which everything was decided by the top management is changing to an era in which decisions are made by everyone. For example, as technologies such as electric cars and wireless electricity are being developed, I think it would be a good idea to talk about interesting and exciting visions of the future, such as the world of Doraemon, where electricity can be used in different ways than in the past, and to work backward from there to create what is needed. I believe that this is why some technologies can be created.

Q14 Finally, do you have a message of support for AWLF?

I have not been able to expand the scope of my work to overseas, but I hope that this will be an opportunity for me to utilize women's power in a certain way, and we can do something together, not only in the energy field. Rather than supporting messages, I hope that you will be able to act together and grow together (lol).



<Mr. Eda's Profile>

Representative of RAUL Inc, Director of the Energy Information Center, Director of the CSR Communication Association, Member of the Innovation Promotion Committee for Regional Re-Ministry Energy Storage Service of the Ministry of the Environment (2019), Advisor to Asia Women Leaders Forum Mr. Eda was born in Tonami City, Toyama Prefecture. Born in Tonami City, Toyama Prefecture, Mr. Eda graduated from the Faculty of Economics at Keio University in 2000. Completed the Executive Management Program (EMP) at the University of Tokyo. Joined Andersen Consulting (now Accenture Japan). He was in charge of the energy and chemical industries and participated in business improvement projects for electric power companies and major chemical manufacturers. Utilizing his knowledge of IT consulting and the energy industry, he established RAUL in 2005 and became its President and Representative Director. He has served as a director of the Energy Information Center, a member of the Steering Committee of Ecomart, a member of the Board of Directors of the CSR Communication Association, a member of the Board of Directors of Tsunagu Mirai Kenkyusho, and a member of the Committee to Promote Innovation in Regional Re- and Energy Storage Services, Ministry of the Environment. In addition to his day job, he writes and lectures on environmental and energy issues. /



Interviewer: Ai Sasaki, Chairman, Asian Women Leaders Forum/Article supported by Jenny