The rise of Asia has become a powerful thesis. China, once dismissed as poor and backward, is now the world’s second largest economy. India, with its own billion-strong population, advanced science, and powerful entrepreneurs, is yet another engine of Asia’s rise. Add to this the powerful economies of Japan and South Korea, and the dynamic countries of Southeast Asia—and a picture emerges of rising wealth, rising confidence and rising leadership. Yet, Asia’s breathtaking economic growth and demographic strength are inextricably intertwined with deep inequality, endemic poverty, environmental degradation, political instability, and other threats. To address these problems, Asia will need all its human talent, including women. Unfortunately, in Asia, leadership remains male-dominated, with few women attaining top positions in the public and private sectors.

This report examines available data and insights on women’s pathway to leadership in Asia, starting at birth through the stages of education, employment and leadership. It looks at the state of leadership in the public and private sectors in Asia-Pacific countries, and highlights policies and practices that help or hinder women in their journey to leadership.

The report was launched in Shanghai and Zhejiang in April 2012 at the third Asia Society-sponsored "Women Leaders of New Asia Summit," where it provoked lively discussion and was accompanied by press coverage in 20+ media outlets around the world. The author has also been asked to speak and write on the subject by organizations and publications throughout Asia. In addition, UNDP is translating the report into Vietnamese for widespread distribution in Vietnam, and a senior parliamentarian from Australia is using the report as a basis for discussion with women’s groups in Australia. The Association of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU) has also distributed the report to senior university executives at its annual meeting. The report continues to generate discussion and has had an impact on advancing the policy discourse on women’s leadership.

The full report can be accessed via:
http://issuu.com/nuslkyschool/docs/wpla?mode=window&backgroundColor=%23222222