

# Present and Future of Migrants in Japan

Reports from the Grantees of the Special Subject

"Migrants and Japanese Society"

(2019 – 2021)



THE TOYOTA FOUNDATION

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## Introduction

The Toyota Foundation launched the Special Subject "Migrants and Japanese Society" in FY2019, providing grants for surveys, research, and practical activities that are expected to contribute to the establishment of a comprehensive system for the acceptance of foreign residents in Japan.

Online activity briefing sessions were held in the last two years with representatives of the grantees' projects on such themes as support for medical care and children, consultation systems, and human resource development.

Now in the fifth year of the Special Subject, we have received reports from 19 grant projects selected for the three-year period from 2019 to 2021 and compiled them into a compendium summarizing the status and outlook of each project. Report contributors have described the background and difficulties encountered at the project launch, insights gained, changes affecting Japanese society, and prospects in an easy-to-understand manner.

Accepting foreign human resources is not just about hiring workers, but also about accepting people who will work together to create Japanese society. It is also necessary to change the systems and ways of conventional Japanese society for people of various cultures and roots to demonstrate their true capabilities and become leaders in Japanese society.

We hope that this compendium of reports will provide hints for the future of Japanese society, which will be created together with people of various roots.

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## The Toyota Foundation

The Toyota Foundation is a grant-making foundation established in 1974 by the Toyota Motor Corporation. It views events from a global perspective as it works to support activities that bring broad, long-term benefits to society. The Toyota Foundation identifies issues in a wide range of areas in line with current needs, including human and natural environments, social welfare, and education and culture, and provides grants for research and projects that address these issues.

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## Special Subject: Migrants and Japanese Society

The acceptance of foreign nationals into Japanese society shifted in 2019 toward the Japanese government considering and implementing specific measures to improve the environment for such people, including the creation of new residence statuses, from the perspective of supplementing the labor force in specific fields such as nursing care and construction. The full-fledged acceptance of foreign nationals will be a major change for Japan's society and economy over the long- and super-long terms, and the impact will be extremely large. Therefore, the Toyota Foundation has launched a grant program for the Special Subject "Migrants and Japanese Society" in FY2019, which specifically addresses the grant area related to "international movement of people" that the International Grant Program has been dealing with.

The grant of the Special Subject, "Migrants and Japanese Society," will be given to projects that study any of the five issues below and implement measures to address these issues (for example, building a mechanism or system to solve an issue or improve a situation) during the grant period.

- (1) Creation of an environment for maximizing the skills and potential of foreign talent
  - (2) Minimizing gaps among foreign residents in their access to information
  - (3) Examination of human and other resources in support of the care and support systems for foreign residents
  - (4) Attracting skilled human resources from abroad
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**Implementation and Dissemination of “Plain Japanese” Training for Health Care Professionals and Students Through a Workshop Assisted by Foreign Residents in a Community / D19-MG-0035**

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**Rie Kuriki**, Director, Specified Nonprofit Corporation Resource Center for Multicultural Community Tokai / Project Representative: Yoshihiko Doi, Representative Director, Same organization as Rie Kuriki

**Building a Comprehensive Platform for Systems Related to the Acceptance of Foreign Workers / D19-MG-0062**

**Shohei Sugita**, Specially-appointed Lecturer, Keio University Graduate School of Law

**Research and Verification Survey for a Support Model for Local Foreign Highly Skilled Personnel by the Industry-Academia-Government-Bank Collaboration / D19-MG-0086**

**Sayuri Ogino**, CEO, B&M Inc.

## What Problems Do Foreign Muslims Living in Japan Face When Visiting Japanese Medical Facilities?

Japanese society is gradually changing to consider diversity. Yet, from a Muslim perspective, there are issues with the front lines of Japanese healthcare that stem from a lack of understanding of the religion's norms. I would like to share my thoughts throughout the project.

### **1 Living in Malaysia, where about 60% of the population is Muslim**

I was a graduate student in Malaysia for about a year starting in 2014. I lived in Malaysia then for the first time and learned firsthand how Muslims live their daily lives. Malaysia is a multi-ethnic nation, with approximately 60% of its population Malay (Muslim), 30% Chinese, and 10% Indian.

Every morning, around 5:00 a.m., when it is still dark, Islamic mosques throughout the cities broadcast prayers. This broadcast, called an adhan, is like a song chanted by men and lasts about five minutes. Muslims have a custom of using this prayer as a cue for their own morning prayers. Very different from worship at shrines and temples in Japan, Muslims purify their hands and feet with water in a mosque, prayer hall, or room, then recite the Koran for several minutes while standing or sitting. Each person prays in silence while concentrating. The religion of Islam is not very familiar to many Japanese. Unless they have Muslim friends or acquaintances nearby, they may have no idea what Muslims value religiously. Conversely, when I actually lived in Malaysia and interacted with Muslims there, I had the impression that many Muslims are down-to-earth, cheerful, sincere, and genuine. I became curious as to whether the personalities of such people are also influenced by their religion. In addition, since I am studying the academic field of public health, I am also interested in Islam and healthcare as a research topic.

### **2 Highest hurdle for Muslims in receiving medical treatment is the doctor's gender**

What issues do Muslims living in Japan face when visiting Japanese hospitals? In conducting interviews throughout the project, I found that there are many difficulties for Muslims regarding elements related to their religious values. One of the biggest challenges I found was that in Japan it is difficult to undergo medical exams in a way that complies with Islamic teachings.

Islamic teachings have strict rules against touching or showing skin of the opposite sex outside of marriage. There are no exceptions to this when visiting a healthcare facility. Regardless of whether or not the other party has improper thoughts, it is a commandment, so it must be strictly observed. Of course, Japanese healthcare personnel do not have such ulterior



Female Muslim nurse and patient. Neither removes the hijab in the hospital.



motives. But under Islam, even when receiving healthcare treatment in Japan, it is not interpreted in that way.

Additionally, women wear a hijab, a scarf-like garment that covers their hair. The same is true for healthcare personnel in countries where Islam is the predominant religion. As shown in the photo, doctors and nurses in Malaysian hospitals always wear hijabs when performing surgery or providing treatment. Skin may be exposed only from the ankles down and from the wrists up, and long sleeves, long pants, and skirts are worn even during the hot summer months.

Let's suppose, for example, a female Muslim patient has some problem with her ear and visits an otolaryngologist. At this time, if a male doctor attends, she cannot remove the hijab. From the viewpoint of Japanese medical professionals, they might be tempted to ask if the patient cannot remove her hijab, "Why did you come to the hospital?" Yet strict Muslims must obey the commandments, without exception. This is something that many healthcare professionals and most Japanese are not aware of. There are not many opportunities to learn about Islam, and I believe that Japanese healthcare professionals do not have the opportunity to learn about such matters in their medical education.

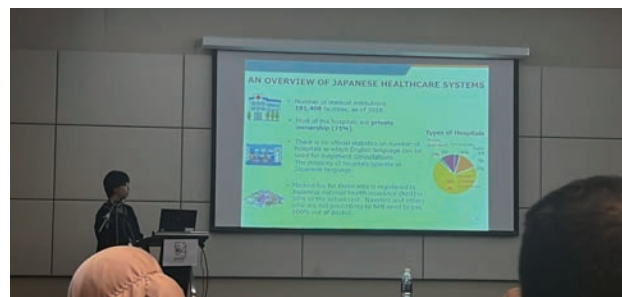
### **3 Consideration for patient diversity is an issue for the future of healthcare**

Before starting this project, I wanted to identify and solve the problems and challenges for Muslims living in Japan when visiting healthcare facilities in Japan. That ambition has not changed, but after actually interviewing many foreign Muslims living in Japan, I realized something else. It is that many matters related to healthcare have not yet fully incorporated considerations of diversity. For example, if the option of being examined by a healthcare professional of the same gender were available, I think some people, not only Muslims but also Japanese, would feel happy about that.

There should be a variety of means of providing healthcare. It will be important to create a system that can respond flexibly to the situations and needs of not only Japanese patients but also foreign patients from various backgrounds living in Japan.



Surgery at a hospital in Malaysia. Nurses wearing hijabs during surgery.



The project's research was presented at an international conference on public health held in Malaysia.



#### **Ayako Kohno**

Program-specific Assistant Professor, Internationalization Promotion Office (IPO), School of Public Health, Graduate School of Medicine, Kyoto University. She was born and raised in Kyoto. During high school, she went to the United States to study on an exchange program and spent a total of seven years in the United States to attend college and graduate school. After school, she was employed by a Japanese company in Tokyo, but her desire to study healthcare again led her to leave the corporate world and study public health at Kyoto University. Her research is primarily related to healthcare in Southeast Asia and the perspective of diversity in healthcare.

Project Title: For Japanese Medical Care to be Better for People from Islamic Countries in Southeast Asia As Well: Interactive Communication Strategy and Social Implementation through Mixed-methods Research

Author: Ayako Kohno, Program-specific Assistant Professor, Internationalization Promotion Office (IPO), School of Public Health, Graduate School of Medicine, Kyoto University

Grant Number: D19-MG-0016

#### **Project Abstract**

When receiving healthcare services, Muslims living in Japan face challenges such as confusion caused by religious obligations and the healthcare system as well as language barriers. This project interviewed Southeast Asian (Indonesian and Malaysian) Muslims living in Japan to identify factors influencing their healthcare-seeking behavior and to explore and find insights to solve the issues they face.

## Seeking to Use Tools to Resolve Misunderstandings Caused by Language and Cultural Barriers

Japan is home to many Brazilian communities. Brazilians and their children live while facing various problems in the Japanese education system. I will present the findings of the project and future issues.

### 外国にルーツを持つ子どもの発達面でのサポートに関するオンライン勉強会

第一回勉強会  
2023.3.18(土)10:00~11:30

外国にルーツを持つ子どもへの発達面でのサポート  
~三重県の事例から~

第二回勉強会  
2023.4月以降で日時調整中

外国にルーツを持つ子どもへのアセスメントと療育



申し込みは  
もしくは問い

[予告 2023年4月以降]

講師(第一回・第二回)  
米田 奈緒子氏  
公認心理師、臨床発達心理士  
(一社)家庭教育研究センターFACE代表



参加費:無料  
対象:  
外国人児童生徒の支援に関わる方  
(教育委員会外国人児童担当者、学校教諭、特別支援コーディネーター、スクールカウンセラー、日本語教師、通訳、療育施設の職員、NPO諸団体の職員、保護者など)

主催・問い合わせ先:  
沖縄県子ども日本語教育研究会



Online workshops were held for parents of children with foreign roots and educators to share information and exchange opinions on common issues.

## 1 Concerns of the Brazilian community and the project launch

Our project started in the unusual form of the contractor partnering with the contractee of a prior study called "A Survey of Brazilian Students Enrolled in the Special Education Classes for Autism and Emotional Disorders under the Japanese Education System" (hereafter referred to as "prior study"). Thus, this grant project attempts to address the needs identified by this prior study.

The percentage of foreign students enrolled in special education classes is higher than that of Japanese students and this is said to be due to the schools' misjudgment of the students' lack of Japanese language ability or their adjustment difficulties (versus their developmental and psychiatric problems). Experiencing or hearing this, some Brazilian communities expressed anxiety and distrust toward Japanese schools and society. Concerned about this situation, the Service for the Assistance of Brazilians in Japan (SABJA) (supported by the Embassy of the Federative Republic of Brazil in Japan) commissioned the Institute for Future Engineering (IFENG) to conduct a survey to understand the situation better. Although the survey results did not confirm the rumor that Brazilian students enrolled in special education

classes outnumber Japanese by five times, it did confirm that there are communication issues between Japanese institutions (mainly schools) and children with foreign roots and their families.

The project members thought that by creating a platform for better information sharing, parents and educators could build trust and overcome or resolve the issues due to differences in language, culture, and education systems. Therefore, this grant project initially started with an aim to expand the support activities of SABJA, which was the original stakeholder of the survey research. SABJA has long been providing psychological counseling and workshops in the native language to support the Brazilian community in Japan.

## 2 Various workshops and consultation sessions switched to online due to the COVID-19 pandemic

Due to the impact of COVID-19, this project, adopted in 2019, decided to switch the face-to-face workshops scheduled at the time of application to online. Since the topics were related to children's development and education, I was apprehensive before the events, but once they were held, I was pleased with the results, which could only be achieved online. After all, a lot

of information can be gathered since participants can come from several communities at once. The ability to learn about information from various communities, such as, "This is what is happening in our community," was exactly what this project aimed for. Of course, not everything went smoothly, but I believe we have identified this as a common issue.

### **3 Development of parenting support and psychoeducational tools adopted for Brazilian culture**

A parenting mobile health (mHealth) program developed by Furukawa, a member of the group, along with researchers in Brazil, is being programmed to be made accessible to families living in Japan. This makes it possible to receive parenting support that fits the Brazilian culture in their native language and at a time that suits their life in Japan. WhatsApp, which many Brazilians access daily, is used to send short video clips and texts in the form of "daily tips" on how to give instructions to children, how to encourage desired behavior, and how to stay calm while communicating with them. Busy parents will be able to access support without having to worry about finding help in the Japanese community or the time difference from their native country.

We are also creating a website that provides evidence-based psychoeducational materials and assessment scales developed in Brazil, in Japanese, Portuguese, and English. Identifying the psychological, behavioral, and developmental issues of children with foreign roots and providing appropriate support can be challenging. Parents worry about whether their children are being understood given cultural differences. Therefore, I hope that Japanese educators and Brazilian parents sharing the same information will facilitate better communication.

Living in an unfamiliar culture can often affect parent-child relationships, so with these tools, I hope to bring research-based support to more families.



Online workshops were held for parents of children with foreign roots and educators to share information and exchange opinions on common issues.

### **4 Learning from the symbiotic society as seen through the project**

New members joined as the project progressed, and it provided an opportunity for personal growth. Through lateral exchanges with other adopted projects and the participation of new members, a multifaceted element was added to the perspectives and approaches to issues.

I became aware of various issues and perspectives that exist

within Japan while working toward the realization of a society in which we can live in harmony with foreigners. On further reflection, I realize that there is much I do not know even within Japan. I think it is only natural that there are many things that are not understood, especially from a foreigner's point of view. That is why we need a place where we can exchange opinions, share information, and disseminate information. I believe this is what creates a society in harmony with foreigners.



A workshop held at Chigiri Elementary School in Toyokawa City in August 2023. At the request of teachers, a workshop was held on how to communicate and teach children with Brazilian roots.



#### **Noriko Yamada**

She is a Research Administrator for the University of the Ryukyus and Fellow of the Institute for Future Engineering (IFENG). She completed her graduate studies at the Graduate School of Business Sciences, University of Tsukuba. At IFENG, she is mainly engaged in research on the educational systems of countries that send out foreign students and research on the acceptance of foreign human resources. She became interested in issues related to the acceptance of foreign students when she was engaged in "Commissioned Research on Brazilian Students Enrolled in the Japanese Education System Entering Special Education Classes for Autism and Emotional Disorders".

Project Title: Survey and Promotion of Multicultural Society Through Supporting Children with International Roots -Creating a Community Where Information Can Be Shared and Trust Can Be Established Across Cultures and Languages

Author: Noriko Yamada, Institute for Future Engineering  
Grant Number: D19-MG-0031

#### **Project Abstract**

This project aims to create tools for information sharing and dialogue to help children connected to foreign countries and their families overcome the differences they experience in Japanese society due to language and cultural differences under the Japanese education system. Service for the Assistance of Brazilians in Japan (SABJA) is expanding its initiatives, such as workshops and consultation sessions, which have been promoted mainly in areas of Brazilian communities in Japan, with the aim of achieving solutions through collaboration and cooperation across positions and regions.



## Status of Foreign Caregivers Supporting Japan's Nursing Care Workplaces and Initiatives to Improve Their Environment

Japan is at the forefront of aging in Asia. The recruitment and retention of foreign workers has attracted considerable attention in line with the declining birthrate and various industries struggling to compete for labor. On the other hand, such workers also face a wide range of problems, such as the labor environment and the decreasing amount of money that can be sent home due to the weak yen. I introduce some of the issues that have come to light through the project.



Three members gave presentations on nursing care at the VNA Hanoi general meeting (October 21, 2022).

### 1 Project objectives and members

What issues do foreign caregivers face in the workplace? The objective of this project is to review what kind of preparation and support are necessary for the host corporations at the front lines, and to aim for a mutually comfortable way of acceptance and working with the caregivers. The members are a diverse group of young executives from medical and welfare corporations who gather at the NPO AHP Networks, Vietnamese nursing faculty, executives of sending agencies, and the chair of the Vietnamese Nursing Association (VNA).

### 2 Responding to Vietnam's rapidly aging population and the diverse concerns of Vietnamese caregivers in Japan

At the time, there were approximately 80 foreign nurses and caregivers at three corporations in Chiba, Gifu, and Nara prefectures, where the members serve as executives. Members of other corporations interviewed these people to uncover issues and planned interviews with the Japan-Vietnam Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) caregivers who had returned home. However, the COVID-19 pandemic restricted staff actions at hospitals and welfare facilities, and research activities were almost suspended for the first year.

In the second year, we held three online seminars titled "Caregiving from Vietnam to Japan," "Tips for Accepting Foreign Caregivers from the Field and from Research Points of View," and "Trainings of Foreign Caregivers," with speakers who are

experts in the field from Japan and abroad. We also conducted a survey of Japan-Vietnam EPA certified caregivers who have returned to Vietnam and surveyed Japanese caregivers who are working with foreign caregivers. Other events included a roundtable discussion between researchers and members and one with Seiko Sasaki, former Commissioner of the Immigration Services Agency.

Vietnam is the largest sending country, accounting for approximately 25% of the 1.82 million foreign workers in Japan. However, the aging of society is already progressing in Vietnam as well, and there is an urgent need to train caregivers for the elderly who need nursing care. At the request of the government, the VNA decided to prepare educational material for this, and an introductory version was completed. This was the first nursing care textbook in Vietnam, and while the objective was to nurture human resources dedicated to caring for the elderly in Vietnam, it was also expected that there would be applicants who would like to try nursing care in Japan. In this regard, we thought it would be useful for the hosting side to know what they have learned about caregiving in Vietnam for ongoing learning, so we translated the text into Japanese and created a 250-page Japanese version of all 23 topics.

At the end of June 2023, two representatives from the VNA visited Japan, and this was used as an opportunity to hold a caregiving textbook review conference at Kio University.

We also conducted other intermittent interviews with foreign nurses and caregivers residing in Japan. They face a variety of

challenges depending on length of stay, gender, marital status, and other factors. For example, a married couple may live far apart from each other, or they may be in the same industry but have different holidays due to different shifts. Others may have brought over family members to live with them, but their Japanese has not improved. There is a limit of 28 hours per week for part-time work. Another issue is that the yen's depreciation has reduced the amount of money that workers can send back to their home countries. On the other hand, the manager of a facility expressed concern about the future of a foreign employee who has been working there for more than 10 years as a single person, even though it is their own wish. "Retention of foreign human resources" is also frequently mentioned and we must also consider ways to engage them beyond a management perspective (although this is self-evident).

On October 21, 2022, we were invited to the 10th general meeting of the VNA, where three of our members gave three presentations on Japanese and Vietnamese nursing care.



A meeting between Vietnamese and Japanese representatives held at Kio University to review the content of nursing care textbooks (July 2, 2022).

### 3 Acceptance of a surprisingly low number of foreign caregivers and outlook

Japan's chronic shortage of nursing care staff has led to a rapidly growing acceptance of foreign caregivers. However, according to the "2021 Survey of Nursing Caregivers," the acceptance of foreign nursing caregivers is only 20-30% at specialized nursing homes for the elderly and geriatric health services facilities. In other words, there are more corporations that have not yet accepted them. The numbers also show a very cool and collected situation, with 64.0% of the respondents in the specialized nursing home and 71.8% in the geriatric health

services facility answering, "not needed" to the question about "plans for new hiring". While accepting this fact, I would like to continue striving to educate and introduce foreign caregivers. Japanese corporations operating nursing care facilities are now working to enhance the overall nursing care services at their facilities by arranging for the introduction of caregiving robots and the use of ICT, in addition to hiring Japanese and foreign staff. We hope to realize care that enhances the quality of life of the elderly through collaboration between the care provided by the unique personalities of foreign caregivers and the attentive and conscientious care provided by Japanese caregivers.



#### Osamu Nimonjiya

He is an executive officer of AHP Networks, a specified nonprofit corporation (NPO) in Japan. From 1994 to 2008, he was engaged in training support program for Vietnamese nurses. In 2018, he was a member of the publication committee for Vietnamese version of the textbook "Gerontological Nursing and Care". His main publications include "33 Proposals for a Multicultural Co-creation Society," edited by Chizuko Kawamura, in which he was in charge of the section on foreign caregivers (Tosei Shimpo 2021), and "Japanese Language Education Practice for Caregiving and Nursing," edited by Hatsumi Kamimura, in which he was in charge of Chapter 4 (Minerva Shobo 2019).

Project Title: Transformation from Home Care to Elderly Care National Insurance: Stabilization and Establishment of Cross-Cultural Cooperation for Foreign Employees at Japan's Nursing Homes.

Author: Osamu Nimonjiya, Executive Officer, Specified Nonprofit Corporation AHP NETWORKS

Grant Number: D19-MG-0034

#### Project Abstract

Japan has a well-developed system of care for the elderly, including long-term care insurance, caregiving facilities, and a certification system for caregivers. In Vietnam, where these three elements are not available, caregiving is performed by family members. Caregiving as a social norm of filial piety, changes to caregiving as a profession when caregivers come to Japan. We will seek concrete measures to address the various issues arising from the gap, as well as to improve the environment for foreign caregivers working in Japan's nursing care front lines and to help them become established in Japan.

### "Status of Acceptance of Foreign Caregivers"

(%)

	E P A	Caregiver	Technical intern	Specified skill worke	International student	Not accepting
Overall n=8,742	0.7	2.0	2.6	1.6	1.3	87.9
Specialized nursing homes n=630	5.2	6.3	11.0	5.2	4.8	75.4
Geriatric health services facilities n=259	3.1	6.2	6.6	5.4	3.5	80.3

(Compiled by the Care Work Foundation, 8/22/2022)

# Improving Healthcare Access for People from Overseas by Promoting "Plain Japanese" in the Medical Field

Language barriers are hindering access to medical consultations for people from overseas. To solve this problem, we have worked to promote and disseminate "plain Japanese" among healthcare professionals. We found that it has a positive impact not only on people from overseas but also on Japanese people with various challenges in hearing and cognitive functions. We will report how our project was conducted and perceived by healthcare professionals and students.



An animated video describing the PCR testing procedure created by the project. This timely video clip promoted public awareness of the importance of "plain Japanese" in healthcare setting.

## 1 **Eliminating the misconception that "medical professionals should speak English when they treat residents from foreign countries"**

Many Japanese people may think that conversations with non-Japanese native speakers must be in English. The same is true for healthcare professionals. In reality, very few people from overseas living in Japan are native English speakers. And many of them are anxious about seeking medical care. It is not uncommon for them to become seriously ill because they visit a medical institution only when they can no longer tolerate the condition. Also, even if they do their best to seek treatment, they may not understand the explanations and remain unable to take the prescribed medications due to anxiety.

A doctor who recognized such situations initiated this project with the help of a health communication specialist together with a multicultural coordinator and former Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer as well as a specialist in Japanese language education, who wanted to change the situation. Their aim was to provide healthcare professionals with training in "plain Japanese" that can be easily understood by people from overseas.

## 2 **The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic stood in the way**

Our original plan was to hold workshops in 10 prefectures with a high percentage of residents with overseas roots, using role-plays with the participation of such residents as simulated patients. When the project began in 2020, however, the pandemic made face-to-face training impossible. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic further pressured foreign residents who

have difficulty accessing health care.

The NPO organization, where one of project members works, received a phone call from a foreign resident stating a health center instructed them to take a PCR test for COVID-19 but the medical institution conducting the test told them to bring an interpreter. It's obviously unreasonable to expect someone suspected of being contagious to be accompanied by an interpreter. Since the procedure of PCR testing is not very complicated, we thought that "plain Japanese" should be sufficient to communicate for it. With the help of a filmmaker and his team who had to stay home due to the government policy then, we created an animated video in one week that conveyed the points of PCR testing in 1 minute and 40 seconds. Featured in NHK News and major national newspapers, the video sent a clear message that "plain Japanese" is useful and needed in the healthcare field.



["Plain Japanese" in Healthcare]  
COVID-19 Testing Edition

## 3 **Disseminating "plain Japanese" nationwide through online sessions and producing teaching materials**

Taking advantage of the online environment that quickly became the norm due to the pandemic, we also launched an online training program accessible to anyone. To ensure effective learning, we continued training sessions in which international students were asked to act as foreign patients during role-



playing exercises in small groups. Comments of the people from overseas included: "It was encouraging to see how seriously the medical staff taking part in the session and making efforts", "I gained a sense of closeness to the hospital by talking with the medical staff during the workshop" and "I want to contribute to improve communication in clinical setting".

Participants requested that "plain Japanese" training also be held at their workplaces as well. On such occasions, we actively dispatched lecturers and simulated patients, trained local residents to become simulated patients, and helped organize workshops. After that, some hospitals started "plain Japanese" training for their employees on their own.

医療関係者のための「やさしい日本語」ワークショップ・プログラム	
14:00-14:10	開会 プログラム表示 (事務局)
14:10-14:25	開会挨拶・ファシリテータと留学生自己紹介 (武田)
14:25-14:30	動画教材PartA-1・2に関する質疑応答 (岩田)
14:30-14:45	ブレイクアウトルームへ移動・グループ内で自己紹介
14:45-15:05	練習問題一単語と文章の変換
15:05-15:25	ロールプレイ1 検診の説明
15:25-15:40	ロールプレイ2 処方説明 (患者役交代)
	グループディスカッション
	①医療で用いる「やさしい日本語」で気づいた点
	②「やさしい日本語」を医療者に普及する方策について
15:40-15:42	メインルームへ移動
15:42-16:00	グループ別発表 全体討議と質疑応答
16:00-16:20	参加者からの感想
16:20-16:30	ファシリテータからのコメント・留学生からの感想
16:30	閉会 *終了後アンケートのご協力をお願いいたします

A scene from online training which does not require travel from far. Therefore, online training has the advantage of attracting participants from all over the country.

## 4 Promoting awareness of "plain Japanese" to healthcare professionals

To make "plain Japanese" widely known to healthcare professionals, we conducted workshops at schools fostering future healthcare professionals and annual conference at various professional organization including the Japan Society for Medical Education, Japan Primary Care Association, and the Japanese Respiratory Society. As a result, we were able to publish the first book on "plain Japanese" in the medical field.

When large-scale COVID vaccinations began in 2021, we received inquiries from local governments officers and Japanese language teachers asking how the vaccination procedure can be conducted in "plain Japanese". Therefore, the project members again made a concerted effort to quickly create video content. This video we produced won the Grand Prize of the "Academy of Medical Education Award" at the 53rd Annual Meeting of the Japan Society for Medical Education. In addition, approximately 44,000 copies of the leaflet were distributed in response to requests from many medical and educational institutions. The website received 66,892 visitors over the two-year period.



["Plain Japanese" in Healthcare] COVID-19 Vaccination Edition



"Plain Japanese" has been published in book form. We attempt awareness-raising through videos, leaflets, websites, and the book.

## 5 "Plain Japanese" is for everyone

The unprecedented pandemic made us realize that access to health care for people whose native language is not Japanese needs to be assured as human rights also from public health point of view. The need for "plain Japanese" has been better understood over the past two years. At Juntendo University Faculty of Medicine, "plain Japanese" has been implemented as a part of its regular curriculum. The program is now spreading nationwide.

The healthcare professionals who participated in the training commented that "plain Japanese" is useful in their daily practice. The way of speaking "plain Japanese" is also easily understood by the elderly, children, people with hearing and cognitive impairment. Medical interpreters and sign language interpreters have also commented that it is easier to interpret when healthcare professionals speak in "plain Japanese". Interpreters are indispensable in the highly specialized field of medicine. The use of "plain Japanese" is also useful to promote the collaboration between interpreters and healthcare professionals.



Yuko Takeda

Dr. Takeda received her medical degree at the University of Tsukuba. She is a primary care physician trained in Boston and has been working in the area of medical education with a focus on health inequities and social disparities. She participates in an outreach program for people in homelessness and collaborates with an NGO helping children whose parents are from overseas.

Project Title: Implementation and Dissemination of "Plain Japanese" Training for Health Care Professionals and Students through a Workshop Assisted by Foreign Residents in a Community

Author: Yuko Takeda, Professor, Department of Medical Education, Faculty of Medicine, Juntendo University  
Grant Number: D19-MG-0035

### Project Abstract

This project was designed to provide a workshop to healthcare professionals and students to experience practicing "plain Japanese" in clinical settings. Local international residents participated in role-plays as simulated patients in the workshops. Our aim was not only to provide learning opportunities but also to build connectedness and trust between healthcare professionals and foreign residents by learning together and listening to each other at the workshops.

# Initiatives for Sustainable Management of Multilingual Consultation Desks

Multilingual consultation desks are available in local communities for foreigners living in Japan to consult in their native language when they have problems or difficulties in their daily lives. I introduce initiatives to examine the current status and challenges of multilingual consultation desks and how they should be.



Face-to-face training by counselors and interpreters involved in multilingual consultation desks. The discussion was heated because everyone knows the front lines very well.

## 1 Project background and launch

The revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, which came into effect in 2019, became a major topic of conversation as the Japanese government indicated that it would expand the acceptance of foreign workers. The "Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals" announced prior to the revision included a variety of measures for accepting foreign residents. A highlight of the measures was the "development of a 'one-stop comprehensive consultation center for multicultural coexistence' (tentative) (approximately 100 locations nationwide, supported in 11 languages)."

Following the enforcement of the revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in 1990, the number of foreign residents living in Japan has increased, and multilingual information and consultation desks had already been established in various locations. However, such desks also faced various challenges, such as consideration of a consultation network that would meet diverse needs, training of counselors and interpreters, and collaboration with various specialized institutions, organizations, and related groups.

This project was launched by a group of members in Aichi Prefecture who are engaged in activities to support foreign residents in their respective capacities based on the view, "It would be a waste to add new desks without improving such issues. This is a good opportunity to leverage our experience and expertise to consider how we can create more effective and sustainable desks."

## 2 Issues revealed in the survey of multilingual consultation desks

As a starting point for the project, we conducted a fact-finding survey of 281 multilingual consultation desks nationwide. Two types of survey forms were prepared and sent by e-mail. One was for contact persons at desks and the other for the counselors and interpreters, resulting in responses from 227 contact persons and 346 counselors and interpreters.

We conducted further interviews with 20 respondents based on the results of the questionnaire. These results are summarized in a report, which is also posted on our website\*. The survey results showed that the following problems with the multilingual consultation desks were cited: "the desks are not well known", "it is not clear to what extent the desk is responsible", "the desks do not adequately meet the needs of foreign residents", and "the desks are not places where counselors and interpreters can work with peace of mind". Based on this feedback, we decided to first consider how we should collaborate with related organizations and also to train counselors and interpreters.

\*"Multilingual Consultation Service Desk Survey 2020 Report"  
<https://note.com/mrct/n/n5ef88a784c9f>





### 3 Development and implementation of a training model for counselors and interpreters

The survey revealed counselors and interpreters would like to receive training to improve their skills, but in fact they receive very little.

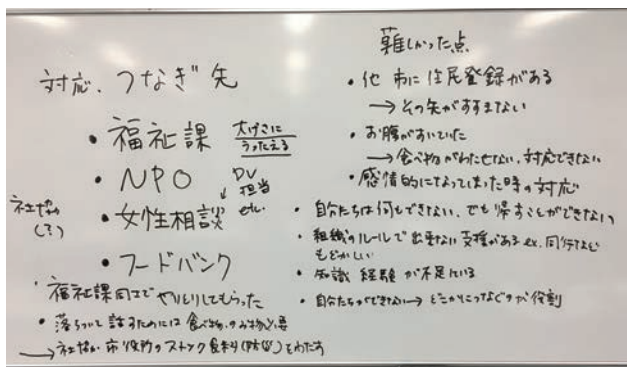
Therefore, we first set up a training program for newly appointed counselors and interpreters that combined three formats: on-demand, online, and face-to-face. The on-demand service was conceived as creating several 5-minute videos in multiple languages that provide basic knowledge of consultation skills and are intended to be viewed repeatedly between consultations. Additionally, online courses were conducted to supplement the on-demand content. By utilizing on-demand and online tools, we have eliminated physical and time constraints such as "not being able to participate in training far from home" and "not being able to leave the workplace for long periods of time".

Furthermore, role-plays and other training sessions were conducted in recognition of the importance of face-to-face training in promoting exchange and networking among counselors and interpreters. A participant's casual remark triggered lively discussions, which could only happen face-to-face, such as whether or not to offer sweets in a drawer to a counselee who complained that he or she had nothing to eat and was hungry, or how to respond to a counselee who breaks out in tears.

We still have much to do in considering the content and form of the training, but we would like to improve it by listening to the feedback of the participants and disseminate it as a model for training



Face-to-face training by counselors and interpreters involved in multilingual consultation desks. The discussion was heated because everyone knows the front lines very well.



The face-to-face training provided many examples of real-life responses and issues from the front lines.

### 4 Looking back on the project

Through the survey and training, the issues facing the consultation desks were clarified, and the direction of what needs to be considered in the future became clear.

We held a succession of online review meetings in promoting the project. The members came from diverse backgrounds, including government representatives and staff from private organizations, so coordinating schedules was not easy. At first, I was unfamiliar with online meetings, so I sometimes had trouble communicating and exchanging ideas smoothly, but the process itself was also a valuable experience. The members were able to see each other's faces on a regular basis, and the fact that we were able to have more in-depth discussions throughout the project will be useful for future activities. On the other hand, the response to the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the reality that cooperation with welfare-related desks is important but rarely occurred. We also shared the view that the next step was to consider "collaboration".



Rie Kuriki

She is the Director of the NPO Resource Center for Multicultural Community Tokai. She was the former Director of the International Exchange and Multicultural Society Division, Aichi International Association. In addition to being involved in multicultural co-existence, international understanding education, Japanese language education, and volunteer training, she was seconded to the EXPO2005 Aichi Volunteer Center, where she coordinated and trained 30,000 volunteers for the expo. Since leaving that position, she has conducted research on multicultural co-existence at a graduate school, worked as a program officer for a foundation, and served as a part-time lecturer at a university.

Project Title: A Strengthening Project of a Multilingual Consultation Service System Through Public-Private Partnerships—Towards Reaching Sustainable Management of (Japan's) Newly Formed Multi-Cultural General Information Consultation System "One-Stop Centers"

Author: Rie Kuriki, Director, Specified Nonprofit Corporation Resource Center for Multicultural Community Tokai

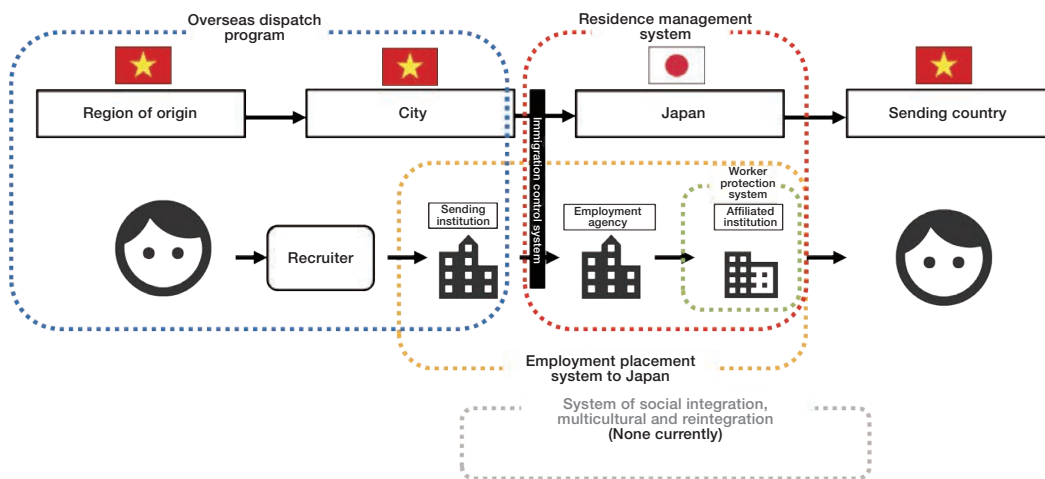
Grant Number: D19-MG-0051

#### Project Abstract

Multilingual consultation desks have been established by public institutions throughout Japan to provide foreign residents with smooth access to necessary administrative services and information and to allow them to receive consultations in their native languages when they have issues. This project surveyed the current status and issues of such consultation desks and proposed the way these desks should be to better assist foreign residents in becoming independent while protecting their rights. It also aimed to develop a human resource development program for counselors, interpreters, and other parties involved.

# Surveying and Improving the State of Laws and Norms in International Labor Migration

Japan accepts many foreign workers, including technical intern trainees. What systems and laws are in place for them to leave their countries of origin and move to Japan to work? The following is an introduction to our initiatives to make the process of international labor migration transparent and to promote the rule of law.



The status quo is as follows when the migration of workers from Vietnam to Japan is diagrammed.

## 1 Clarifying the whole picture of the legal system in the international migration of workers

The reason behind our project "Building a comprehensive platform for systems related to the acceptance of foreign workers" (hereinafter the "project") was the low level of transparency in the process of international labor migration to Japan, which has hindered the promotion of the rule of law.

Intrinsically, when people move from the rural areas (region of origin) of their countries of origin (sending countries) to the urban areas or destination countries (receiving countries), I feel there should be a corresponding legal system that reduces the vulnerabilities of migrant workers.

Specifically, as shown in the figure above, the labor market law of the country of origin, the Overseas Dispatch System, is linked to the Japanese labor market law, the Employment Security Act, and its special exception, the Act on Proper Technical Intern Training and Protection of Technical Intern Trainees. In line with this, immigration and labor-related laws and regulations are organically linked to shape the legal system of the international labor migration process.

Yet, I feel that the entire legal system in such international labor migration has not received significant attention, and

that in Japan, the spotlight and workload have focused only on immigration laws. And the reason for this may be a lack of knowledge of what laws and regulations are in place and how they are applied.

We surveyed therefore the applicable legal systems of the sending countries for China, Vietnam, the Philippines, and Indonesia. The results were published as a book, and we conducted trainings and attempted to create a platform for information collection.

## 2 Overcoming the pandemic by outsourcing surveys to a law firm

At the project launch, we faced unexpected challenges, such as the difficulty of conducting field surveys due to the unforeseen outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, by outsourcing these surveys to a law firm with expertise and networks in each country, we were able to research the necessary laws and regulations and publish them as a book.

Additionally, six training sessions for practitioners were held based on this book, which achieved certain results. Based on these activities, we are currently in discussions with NGOs to establish an information collection platform.

### 3 Aiming for greater transparency in the international labor migration process

What I felt through this project was how much is not seen in international labor migration toward Japan.

Figure 1 shows a survey of the process of international labor migration which was conducted by visiting Nghe An Province in Vietnam, an area that sends many technical interns to Japan. (The research travel expenses for this trip were also subsidized by this project.) International labor migration into Japan is a complicated process that leads from the rural areas of the sending countries to Japan.

I believe the role of lawyers in this field is to clarify these complicated pathways and then to examine what laws and norms exist and what norms should exist.

Before this project's start, there was considerable uncertainty about the process and what laws existed. However, I believe this project has clarified some of these issues.

### The Process and Functions in International Labor Migration

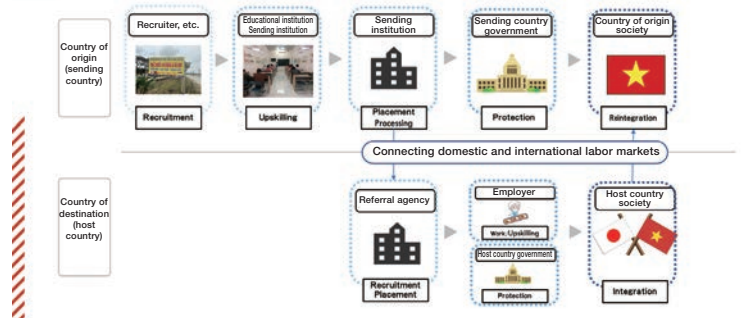


Figure 2

Diagram of the roles played by the country of origin and by the country of destination

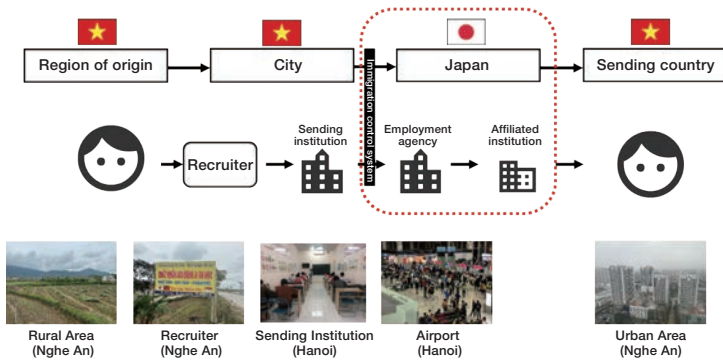


Figure 1  
Diagram of the route of workers coming to Japan from Nghe An Province, Vietnam.



#### Shohei Sugita

He is a lawyer (Tokyo Bar Association), an attorney registered with the Immigration Bureau, and a labor and social security attorney. After working as a specially-appointed lecturer at Keio University Graduate School of Law and Research and Education Center for Japanese Law (Vietnam), Nagoya University Graduate School of Law; a visiting researcher at Hanoi University of Law, and a law firm, he is currently a representative partner of Global HR Strategy, a specialist in international cooperation (foreign employment and labor-related laws and immigration-related laws) at Japan International Cooperation Agency, and a research fellow at Keio Institute for Global Law and Development (KEIGLAD).

This project also made us think about the roles of country of origin and country of destination in international labor migration. Figure 2 summarizes the roles played by the country of origin (Recruitment → Upskilling → Placement → Protection → Reintegration) and the country of destination (Integration, etc.). Rather than both sides having separate functional modules, I feel that we need to build systems in a mutually cooperative manner and without creating any gaps in the international labor movement process.

I believe this project has been able to make the process of international labor migration more transparent in a holistic manner by tracking the migration process; in other words, the migrant's experience.

In the future, based on the information uncovered in this project, we will continue to investigate and disseminate information to make the entire international labor migration process more transparent.

Project Title: Building a Comprehensive Platform for Systems Related to the Acceptance of Foreign Workers  
 Author name: Shohei Sugita, Specially-appointed Lecturer, Keio University Graduate School of Law  
 Grant Number: D19-MG-0062

#### Project Abstract

This project aimed to contribute to the transparency of the legal system for foreign employment by (1) collecting laws of foreign workers in sending countries, immigration laws and labor-related laws, and (2) building a platform for disclosing the collected information.

# Embracing Bangladesh's Highly Skilled Human Resources as Working Foreigners Rooted in the Region

Miyazaki Prefecture is now actively hiring Bangladeshi IT engineers. This presentation will introduce a project to build a support model for host companies and communities to accept their different backbones in terms of culture, customs, and religion.



A scene from the symposium held at the end of the project. Issues to be addressed in the future by both communities and companies were clarified.

## 1 Challenges that lie beyond promoting acceptance

Since 2017, Miyazaki City, University of Miyazaki, and local IT companies have been planning and implementing the "Miyazaki-Bangladesh Model," a project to actively recruit and match Bangladeshi IT engineers as a solution to the IT human resource shortage. Specifically, the model includes (1) Japanese language courses in Bangladesh by instructors from the University of Miyazaki; (2) Internships, Japanese language education, and courses on Japanese culture conducted in cooperation between Miyazaki University and host companies in the city after arrival at Japan; and (3) Miyazaki City subsidizing the expenses of the host companies. Through this model, companies in Miyazaki Prefecture are now actively hiring Bangladeshi IT engineers.



On the other hand, most of the companies hiring Bangladeshi IT engineers were hiring foreign employees for the first time and had not yet developed the know-how to accept them, so the reality was that they were learning to accept them through trial and error. Various types of support were needed, such as administrative procedures and housing rental contracts at the start of the workers' new lives, ongoing Japanese language skill development after employment, and career support based on differences in values. It became apparent that some local SMEs felt limited in their ability to handle these issues on their own.

The "Miyazaki-Bangladesh Model" has provided many opportunities for those involved to share an awareness of the issues and discuss what can be done to address them from their own perspectives. It was during this process that we learned about this grant program from the Toyota Foundation and

decided to apply for this as a project to take the model a step forward.

The project planned to (1) share issues and know-how by setting up a local platform (council) and analyze the current situation, (2) make a program for supporting life of working foreigners and provide it as a paid service, (3) conduct multicultural symbiosis training for both companies and foreigners, (4) examine the credit guarantee system for working foreigners, and (5) make policy proposals and conduct activities to promote local understanding.

### Membership based employment / Job based employment

	Japanese 	Western 
<b>Employment</b>	<b>Membership based</b> Task is assigned by member's skill and situation	<b>Job based</b> Member is assigned by tasks
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Amoeba type</b>	<b>Building block type</b>
<b>Job Description</b>	<b>Vague, Flexibility</b>	<b>Clear, Purpose-specific</b>
<b>Evaluation</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Results</b>
<b>Project style</b>	<b>Quality first</b>	<b>Speed first</b>
<b>Hiring</b>	<b>Potential hiring</b>	<b>Career hiring</b>
<b>Assigning</b>	<b>Expect to complete with other's advice</b>	<b>Expect to complete by oneself</b>

Providing training for human resources from Bangladesh prior to their arrival in Japan to help them understand the differences in companies, communities, and work procedures.



## **2 Working on outputs while contending with COVID-19**

One of the most memorable aspects for me was the impact of COVID-19. It was before the pandemic that the people involved in the project were excitedly preparing a proposal for the project. However, by the time we received the notice that our proposal was accepted, and we started our activities, we were in the throes of the so-called "COVID disaster." I remember feeling very anxious about whether we would be able to produce a certain output amid the pandemic.

The schedule and content of meetings had to be changed, as discussions among the parties involved regarding the establishment of the council could not be held. And the members who were scheduled to prototype livelihood support had to cancel their trips. The Toyota Foundation responded flexibly and allowed us to implement the project under the situation at hand. Consultations with the concerned parties were conducted either online or individually, and content regarding lifestyle support was created before and after the arrival in Japan.

After this period, the symposium held at the end of the project was the capstone of all activities to date. The symposium featured an online keynote address by Professor Miah, who teaches human resource management at a top private university in Bangladesh. He referred to successful Bangladeshi IT human resources living in Miyazaki, and applauded the support provided by the host companies, the Miyazaki City, University of Miyazaki, and other local communities working together to support the program.

It was also a deeply meaningful opportunity for the University of Miyazaki, Miyazaki City, and host companies to speak about the prospects of the program, while considering their respective challenges.

## **3 Hypothesis turned into conviction on the path to resolving issues**

Through this project, we have learned that it is important for the local community (local government and universities, etc.) to be actively involved in accepting foreigners in rural areas, and for companies to create horizontal linkages with each other. I also became aware of the fact that each institution is seeking the same. In addition to supporting Japanese language study at local universities and other educational institutions and exchanges with other educational institutions (junior high schools, high schools, etc.), Miyazaki City led in creating a welcoming atmosphere and mechanisms to connect them with the community. This is not something that a single company can easily do on its own. Furthermore, the sense of owing issues and cross-cultural understanding initiatives on the part of the companies that interact with them every day often provide great ideas for peer companies. These realizations were only hypotheses before this project, but they became convictions as we analyzed the status quo and faced future initiatives through this project.

The Bangladeshi IT human resources working in Miyazaki will be the generation who marry and raise children. A variety of new issues are anticipated, including spousal employment, children's schooling, learning the native language and participating in cultural and religious events of the home country, as well as transportation, hospital visits, and food, which are important when raising children. We will continue to resolve issues as residents living in the same community.



The Miyazaki Bangladesh Association was established due to the increase in IT human resources from Bangladesh working in the prefecture.



### **Sayuri Ogino**

She graduated from Soka University in 2006 with a degree in Business Administration. After that, she worked at an IT company as an SE for about nine years. She then returned to her home prefecture in 2015 to join KJS Company Ltd. in Miyazaki, where she participated in an e-learning research project in Bangladesh. In 2016, she started a recruiting business at B&M, Inc. and has been matching and supporting the acceptance of more than 70 Bangladeshi IT engineers in collaboration with industry, academia, and government in Miyazaki.

**Project Title:** Research and Verification survey for a Support Model for local foreign highly skilled personnel by the Industry-Academia-Government-Bank collaboration

**Author:** Sayuri Ogino, CEO, B&M Inc.

**Grant Number:** D19-MG-0086

#### **Project Abstract**

In Miyazaki Prefecture, industry, academia, and government are working together to match Bangladeshi high-level IT human resources with companies in the prefecture as a measure to promote the industrial development and address human resource shortages. In the "Research and Verification survey for a Support Model for local foreign highly skilled personnel by the Industry-Academia-Government-Bank collaboration" that we conducted this time, we built a model of support for working foreigners rooted in the region, using Bangladesh's highly skilled human resources as a case study.



2020

# Grant List FY2020

**Supporting Migrant Communities in Accessing Information and Developing Pathways for Testing, Diagnosis and Treatment of COVID-19 / D20-MG-0017**

**Tamotsu Nakasa**, Representative, SHARE (Services for the Health in Asian & African Regions)

**International Joint Project toward the Construction and Deployment of "Multicultural Regional Vitalisation Models" based on Skilled Migrants' Entrepreneurship and Investment / D20-MG-0018**

**Nana Oishi**, Associate Professor, Asia Institute, the University of Melbourne / Project Representative: Atsushi Takeda, Professor, Faculty of Industrial Sociology, Ritsumeikan University

**Creating a Society Where Anybody Can Give Birth and Raise Children without Worries: Investigation on Conditions of Foreign Parents Raising Children from Pregnancy to Pre-school Nurturing / D20-MG-0022**

**Kumiko Sakamoto**, Representative, Network for Intercultural and Inclusive Society

**Road to a Diverse Society for All Patients: Improving the Quality of Medical Interpreters by Establishing an OJT Training System at Medical Institutions / D20-MG-0028**

**Hideomi Yamada**, Assistant Manager, International Medical Center, The University of Tokyo Hospital

**Strategic Approaches for a Social Infrastructure to Invite Foreign Human Capital: Establishing a Japanese Qualification Framework (JQF) and Utilizing Foreign Credential Evaluation (FCE) Systems / D20-MG-0072**

**Shingo Ashizawa**, Vice President and Professor, Department of Global Communication, Kansai University of International Studies

# Creating Pathways for Solutions to the Healthcare Challenges of Foreigners Exposed by the COVID-19 Pandemic

Foreigners working in Japan have suffered various hardships from the pandemic, including losing their jobs and not having access to support and vaccine information. I will introduce trial-and-error initiatives to create a system to deliver information to those in need of support as well as collaboration among organizations.



A scene from the final report meeting. Plans for the next phase were also presented.

## 1 The pandemic made it immediately more difficult for foreigners to access healthcare

The problem of access to healthcare services for foreigners, which had been pointed out for some time, became apparent with the pandemic. In the foreign community, the lack of information, housing, and income led to the spread of the disease from living in close quarters due to such economic challenges.

At the beginning of this project's activities, interviews were conducted with Vietnamese, Myanmar, and Nepalese workers and students, self-help groups, healthcare institutions, and foreigner consultation services, etc. to clarify the issues. Based on the results, the project started to address three issues: (1) dissemination of information to the foreign community, (2) creation of pathways to enable foreigners to access examination and medical treatment at hospitals, and (3) collaboration and bridge building. Migrants' Neighbor Network & Action (MINNA), the implementing body of this project, is operated by a group of volunteers from "Our SDGs," Services for the Health in Asian & African Regions (SHARE), National Center for Global Health and Medicine Bureau of International Health Cooperation, Institute of Developing Economies, Japan External Trade Organization (IDE-JETRO), and other organizations.

## 2 Facebook is better than a website for spreading information

Regarding the dissemination of information, animated videos (in Vietnamese, Myanmar, Nepalese, English, and Japanese) were created, explaining infection prevention measures to be

taken at mealtimes and where to contact in case of problems. They were disseminated through Facebook, consultation services for foreigners, and networks of concerned and support groups. However, the videos had only limited number of views, and the key was who would disseminate the information. In other words, influencers. After much trial and error, we were able to establish a cooperative relationship with a Facebook page for Vietnamese living in the country called TAIHEN. TAIHEN has several hundred thousand followers and was able to effectively deliver COVID-related information through the page.



Information provided on Facebook by the Vietnamese online community TAIHEN.

## 3 Support activities to promote vaccination

Concerning the creation of pathways for foreigners to receive tests and medical examinations, health centers began to be pressed for work in dealing with infected patients and put off dealing with foreign nationals due to spread of COVID-19.



A multilingual flowchart, "Flow Chart for When You Become COVID-19 Positive," was created to reduce the burden of dealing with foreigners infected with the disease. Furthermore, the "Consultation Center for Foreigners' New Corona Vaccine (COVIC)" was established in cooperation with the NPO Citizen's Network for Global Activities (CINGA) to provide telephone consultation on vaccination. A total of 550 consultations were received over a six-month period, and support was provided to foreigners from 31 countries and regions living in 20 prefectures. Many of those who received consultations were people with provisional release or short-term residence status who were not sent vaccination vouchers.

Many municipalities were not aware of the administrative notice from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, such as "if the residence is clear, the person is eligible for vaccination," and COVIC carefully explained this to each municipality so that many of those receiving consultations could be vaccinated. On the other hand, it also highlighted the issue of undocumented foreigners not having access to the vaccination vouchers themselves.



A scene from telephone consultation at COVIC

#### 4 "Health Handbook for Vietnamese Working in Japan"

The results of the above-mentioned surveys and activities gained through MINNA were disseminated not only domestically but also internationally. This attracted the attention of the Vietnam Office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which commissioned the development of a "Health Handbook for Vietnamese Working in Japan." By making full use of the network that had been cultivated up to that point, a team was formed to prepare the handbook, which consisted of experts in various fields. In terms of content, the main health issues faced by young generations were covered, including mental health, occupational health, sexual reproductive health, and infectious diseases. The content also includes contact information for various consultation services, including public institutions and NGOs, instructions on how to use clinics and hospitals, and explanations on health insurance and payment of medical expenses, and has been compiled into the "Health Handbook for Vietnamese Working in Japan." Many municipalities were not aware of the administrative notice from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, such as "if the residence is clear, the person is eligible for vaccination," and COVIC carefully explained this to each municipality so that many of those receiving consultations could be vaccinated. On the other hand, it also highlighted the issue of undocumented foreigners not having access to the vaccination vouchers themselves.

### 5 Regional cooperation seminars across various professions

As for collaboration and bridging, a "Prefectural Profile" was created by collecting and analyzing reports and media coverage of trainees in various regions of Japan. In addition, interviews were conducted with companies, schools, and others who accept foreign personnel, and issues and countermeasures related to the health, lifestyle, labor, etc. of foreign residents in Japan were disseminated. As for issues related to technical training, we found that various parties involved with foreigners in each region are not well connected to each other. We have therefore organized "Regional Collaboration Seminars" in Nagasaki, Hyogo, and Fukuoka to create opportunities for dialogue among people concerned with foreign residents.

The final report meeting was held in April 2023. In the future, we would like to promote the "Health Handbook for Vietnamese Working in Japan," create a website version, and make it available in multiple languages (Myanmar and Nepali). In addition, we plan to implement practical projects in certain regions.

many of those receiving consultations could be vaccinated. On the other hand, it also highlighted the issue of undocumented foreigners not having access to the vaccination vouchers themselves.



Tamotsu Nakasa

Representative, SHARE (Services for the Health in Asian & African Regions). After graduating from Hiroshima University School of Medicine, he joined the Bureau of International Health Cooperation of the National Center for Global Health and Medicine, Japan, where he worked for many years as an expert in global health in the fields of emergency medical assistance, maternal and child health, infectious disease control, and international health human resource development in more than 25 countries. Currently, he is expanding his activities to support foreign residents in Japan.

Project Title: Supporting Migrant Communities in Accessing Information and Developing Pathways for Testing, Diagnosis and Treatment of COVID-19

Author Name: Tamotsu Nakasa, Representative, SHARE (Services for the Health in Asian & African Regions)

Grant number: D20-MG-0017

#### Project Abstract

To address the health issues of foreign workers, we provided information through various tools, including internet tools such as Facebook, handouts, and training sessions. They ranged from Health Handbook for Vietnamese Working in Japan, training for healthcare workers on responding to foreigners, assistance in obtaining vaccination vouchers for foreigners who have difficulty accessing healthcare services, creation of Prefectural Profile with information on technical intern trainees, and seminars on regional cooperation with people involved in foreigners' issues.

## Modeling and Widely Sharing Case Studies of Local Regions Where Foreign Entrepreneurs and Skilled Migrants Are Gathering and Contributing

There are rural towns and villages that attract the attention of skilled migrants beyond such cities as Tokyo and Osaka. Many of the migrants are entrepreneurs and investors who contribute to the development of their local communities. This project was launched from that starting point. I will present some insights gained in this report.



Niseko in Hokkaido is a popular area for foreigners. Bilingual street names can be seen throughout the area.

### 1 Potential for regional vitalisation seen from the acceptance of migrants

After moving to Australia from Japan in 2013, I discovered that many of the local citizens around me were keenly interested in rural Japan, including the Niseko district of Hokkaido and Hakuba Village in Nagano Prefecture. When I visited these areas, I found many foreigners who originally arrived as tourists were attracted to the area and relocated there, including many of whom had received higher education. And it was through the activities of such people that the regions were greatly advanced.

When I participated in government review meetings in Japan on policies for accepting skilled migrants, the committee members including myself mainly envisioned they would be employed in companies in major cities. Yet I thought that the key to the future would be how to attract such skilled migrants to rural areas. I also noticed that some areas outside of the Niseko and Hakuba were attracting foreign entrepreneurs in completely different ways. I thought that if we could analyze the success factors and challenge resolution processes of these regions around Japan, it could provide helpful strategies and ideas for many municipalities struggling with declining populations and labour shortages, and lead to regional vitalisation.

It was during this time that I learned of the Toyota Foundation's grant scheme for a specific program, "Migrants and Japanese Society," and decided to apply for it. I approached Japanese researchers who were experts in sociology, tourism, public administration, linguistics, and statistics, as well as Australian researchers who were experts in education and healthcare, with whom I had previously collaborated on research. Furthermore, to achieve a more balanced outcome, I assembled a diverse international team with advisors from business and government.



Hakuba Village in Nagano Prefecture was the site of the Nagano Olympics. Migrants are contributing to the development of the region.

## 2 Foreign entrepreneurs leading of regional vitalisation and the government's passion to support them

The biggest challenge for this project was that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic persisted longer than expected. With the rapid diffusion of communication tools such as Zoom and Teams in society, we attempted to conduct interviews online, but it was difficult to get referrals from peers. We were keenly aware of the limitations imposed by our inability to visit the regions in person. After the ban on individual travel from abroad was lifted in October 2022, we realized once again the importance of holding face-to-face interviews in the field, while conducting on-site research and analysis at a rapid pace.

The most memorable aspect of the research was that the community of foreign entrepreneurs in Niseko and Hakuba, where I conducted my research, was much larger than expected and had vitalised the regions. I was also surprised by the fact that in Hakuba Village, a foreign entrepreneur as a member of the community, gained the trust of the local residents and was elected as a district leader, where he served for two terms.

In addition, although it was not reported in the Japanese media, we heard from foreigners that they were moved by the fact that all foreigners in Japan with a resident card received COVID special cash payments and stimulus payments from the government. In contrast, in some other countries, foreigners without permanent residency were unable to obtain any government benefits during the pandemic. In Niseko, in particular, I was extremely impressed by the "no foreigner left behind" stance of the town hall staff, who visited the home of every foreigner who had not applied for the COVID special cash payments, and carefully explained the procedures to those who did not understand it and helped them to apply. After the pandemic, I also learned that, Fukuoka City Hall staff members were applauded for their personalised assistance for each foreigner seeking to start a business, such as accompanying them to the banks to open accounts. I would like to present as many positive examples of the contributions of these foreign entrepreneurs in their communities and the efforts of municipality staff in as much detail as possible in our project report and publications.



The police boxes in Niseko are also bilingual so that foreigners can easily identify them.

## 3 Seeking to deliver multicultural regional vitalisation models to many municipalities

As this project enters its final year, the background to the success of the surveyed regions in attracting foreign entrepreneurs, challenges to be overcome, and similarities and differences have become clear.

We plan to further deepen our analysis by incorporating the results of quantitative surveys, and ultimately hope to present a variety of "multicultural regional vitalisation" models that can be used as a reference for many municipalities throughout Japan. When we have compiled the results, we plan to upload some of the case studies to the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) website so that municipalities throughout Japan can access them. We have also decided to have Akashi Shoten publish the research outcomes as a book.

Through this project, we hope that we can show one option for Japan to move in a better direction in the future as the country faces a declining population and labour shortages.



**Nana Oishi**

She is an Associate Professor in Japanese Studies at the University of Melbourne. Prior to her current position, she was a Professor of Sociology at Sophia University in Tokyo and Policy Analyst at the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva. She has served on the United Nations Expert Meeting on Migration, Development and Social Protection and various national advisory boards on immigration in Japan. She completed her Ph.D. degree in Sociology at Harvard University as a Fulbright Scholar and received several awards including the ISS-OUP Award from the Oxford University Press and the University of Tokyo.

Project Title: International Joint Project toward the Construction and Deployment of "Multicultural Regional Vitalisation Models" based on Skilled Migrants' Entrepreneurship and Investment

Author: Nana Oishi, Associate Professor in Japanese Studies at the University of Melbourne

Grant Number: D20-MG-0018

### Project Abstract

Drawing on cases of municipalities where skilled migrants have been contributing to the local economy through investment and entrepreneurship, this project shares best practices in attracting skilled migrants and produces a variety of models for reference by other municipalities across Japan. It identifies the factors leading to success and the remaining challenges. For this purpose, the project team will publish a book and prepare a handbook and policy recommendations.



## Investigating What Is Needed for the Healthy Development of the Ever-Increasing Number of Children with Foreign Roots

Children born in Japan with foreign nationalities are subject to wide variations in language and educational environments depending on their parents' child-rearing environment. We conducted a wide-ranging fact-finding survey of 13 municipalities and 14 areas in the Tokai region on this issue, which until now has been addressed individually. The following is an introduction to the project until now, the challenges involved in compiling the report, and the next steps for the project.



Group photo taken with members of the Foreigner Support / Multicultural Coexistence Net after a meeting to exchange opinions at the Nagoya Regional Immigration Services Bureau.

### **1 As an organization that studies and researches the environment of children with foreign roots in a wide area**

Network for intercultural and inclusive society was formed in 2019 by citizen groups in the three Tokai prefectures (Aichi, Gifu, and Mie). The organization is working to support foreign residents and create a multicultural society in collaboration with the Nagoya Regional Immigration Services Bureau. While providing support to children with foreign nationalities, we have seen many children struggle to acquire Japanese language proficiency and improve their academic performance. We felt that it was too late to provide such support after children have entered elementary school, and that follow-up to raise awareness of child-rearing among parents and approaches by government services were needed before then, ideally from pregnancy. With the establishment of this network, we sought to survey the child-rearing environment for foreign children in the Tokai region on a wide scale, not just in a few localities or individual organizations, and research the current status and issues.

### **2 The project was carried out through late-night online meetings**

The survey was conducted by 10 groups in 14 regions. Owing to

the large number of groups, we struggled to make progress as planned. The analysis and research was handled by university professors, but the only time that worked for the team scattered in Tokyo, Aichi, and Mie was at night, so we held many meetings via Zoom starting at 10:00 p.m. Due to the pandemic, online meetings have become the norm, often lasting until late night, which has been a challenge. On the other hand, the widespread use of online meetings has made it possible for people separated by vast distances to participate. I believe the research of many citizen groups and the collaboration of researchers resulted in a groundbreaking research study. I was happy to hear one of the parents interviewed say, "I am very grateful to the Japanese society for supporting us foreigners."

The survey included a census of each local government's population of children with foreign nationalities in 2015 and 2020. Although there is a shared awareness of the problem of population decline, it seemed to me that few local governments are aware of the foreign population, by age group, type of residency status, and national government, and considering this information in their local government plans.

### **3 Recommendations were also made to the government based on data-driven reports**

The wide-area survey by 13 municipalities (14 regions) in three

prefectures was unprecedented and allowed us to conduct research based on many survey cases. We found that multilingual mother-child health handbook distribution and home visits to households with newborns and infants are being implemented for foreign families, but that there is little multilingual child-rearing information in Japan and few interpreters are available to support infant health checkups. Based on the survey, a report was prepared and debriefing sessions were held in various locations. In addition, we were able to make recommendations to the government and other concerned parties.

We also received feedback from government officials that they appreciated the data-driven report because they could reflect its findings in future policies. Although we had felt firsthand that the population of foreigners had become multinational and the number of births had increased in the area, we thought it was worthwhile that the survey had identified the actual situation and provided a basis for making recommendations. We also keenly felt that although government service programs are available, many of these services are unfamiliar to foreigners in their home countries, which makes it easy for them to be missed areas of support because they "cannot ask for assistance they are unaware of". To ensure information reaches them, interpreters who connect cultural differences are necessary, especially those who can interpret with basic knowledge related to maternal and child health, child-rearing support, childcare, and education. There were differences in attitude in the responses to foreigners depending on the municipality, and I thought that there were large differences in the administrative services available depending on the area in which one lives.



The final report session was held at JICA Chubu. Nagoya Regional Immigration Services Bureau, JICA Chubu, Aichi Prefecture, Mie Prefecture, Toyota City, Inuyama City, Suzuka City, Kameyama City, and others participated.

#### **4 Wish for the project to benefit the healthy growth of all children living in Japan**

Reports on this project were also delivered to the respective local governments and administrative agencies such as the Children and Families Agency, the Immigration Services Agency, and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, to report on issues and current conditions in the child-rearing environment for children with foreign roots in Japan. In addition, the researchers involved are making research presentations based on the reports in their respective fields of expertise. The Children and Families Agency has been established, and measures to support the child-rearing of children of foreign nationalities have been specified. I hope that this report will be used as an example for the healthy development of all children living in Japan, regardless of nationality.



The completed report was submitted to Hanako Jimi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of the Cabinet Office. She recommended that the policies of the Children and Families Agency improve support for foreign children.



The report can be read here.



#### **Kumiko Sakamoto**

She is the Representative of the Foreigner Support / Multicultural Coexistence Net. She was born in Atami City. She graduated from Meiji Gakuin University, Faculty of Sociology, and stayed in Brazil with her family from 1993 to 1998. After returning to Japan, she began working as a part-time teacher in an international classroom at an elementary school in Suzuka City in 2002, where she was involved in the education of children with foreign nationalities. Through the children, she keenly felt that there is no system in Japanese society to accept foreigners not only in education but also in life in general. In 2005, she established the NPO Aidensha with the aim of supporting foreign residents and creating a multicultural society. In July 2019, she established Foreigner Support / Multicultural Coexistence Net with 12 citizen groups in Aichi, Mie, and Gifu prefectures and became its representative.

Project Title: Creating a Society Where Anybody Can Give Birth and Raise Children without Worries: Investigation on Conditions of Foreign Parents Raising Children from Pregnancy to Pre-school Nurturing

Author: Kumiko Sakamoto, Representative, Network for Intercultural and Inclusive Society

Grant Number: D20-MG-0022

#### **Project Abstract**

As the number of foreign workers increases each year, the number of residence statuses that allow family members to accompany them has also increased, resulting in a rise in the number of children born in Japan with foreign nationalities. However, their realities, including the increase in these families and their children, are not well understood. We conducted surveys and research in 14 areas of 13 municipalities in three Tokai prefectures on child-rearing environments for foreign nationals with multiple languages and cultural backgrounds and compiled the results in a report.

## Spreading Medical Interpretation is a Lifeline for Accurate Medical Care for Foreigners

Even for Japanese people, many of the words heard in medical institutions are unfamiliar. We can imagine that would be extremely difficult for a patient with limited Japanese proficiency to listen and respond to medical staff. I will introduce initiatives to promote medical interpretation to resolve these issues.



At an onsite event for medical interpreters. Cafe roundtable discussion among medical interpreters to share their experiences and address concerns about OJT.

### **1 Medical interpreters increasingly important to provide accurate medical care to foreigners**

In summer 2020 at the time of the grant application, the Tokyo Olympics were postponed until the following year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among foreign patients, those residing in Japan account for about 90% of the total. However, the acquisition of Japanese language proficiency varies greatly by person, and the medical field is the most challenging setting for foreigners.

The demographics of foreigners living in Japan is constantly changing, and young people are now coming from many countries, especially from Asia. Medical facilities are visited for pregnancy, childbirth, and children's check-ups, in addition to occupational injuries. In the medical field, different terms are used from those encountered by foreigners in their daily lives, including the names of diseases. Medical staff have also asked for unreasonable accommodations of foreign patients, such as wanting them to understand Japanese because they live in Japan, or wanting them to bring someone (friend, child, etc.) who understands Japanese to the facility. We started the accreditation system for medical interpreters in 2020 based on the thinking that they are important because incomplete communication is linked directly to the risk of medical accidents. In this project, the team comprised diverse occupations and

backgrounds: Yamada (physician), Minamitani (physician), and Itoigawa (researcher), members of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare research group (accreditation and practical application of medical interpretation) from 2015 to 2020; Matsuzaki (physician), Toho University Faculty of Medicine / Tokyo Medical Association Foreign Patients Committee member; Hori (nurse, midwife), an infection control consultant; Sawada, CEO of the medical interpretation company mediPhone; Noriko Yamada of the Council for Interpreter's Quality and Competence; and Imai (clerical work) and Zheng (medical interpreter), both of Mitsui Memorial Hospital.

### **2 Benefits of the diffusion of online communication and reaffirmation of the importance of face-to-face interaction**

Historically, pandemics have been contained after about two years, but COVID-19 lasted for three. That said, this project conducted an online kick-off symposium, seminars (eight times) regarding medical interpreting, a symposium at a related conference in fall 2020, and online on-the-job training (OJT) in winter 2020, which confirmed the practicality of online systems. In fall of 2021, we held a symposium based on the results of OJT at a related conference.

The acceleration of the online (remote) trend between medical



interpreters and patients (medical providers) over the past three years has been a blessing not only for infection control, but also for patients, medical providers, and medical interpreters, paving the path for online training for medical interpreters. Yet, the most important aspect of medical care is face to face, which was confirmed during an onsite held in May 2022.



There was a lively exchange of ideas across the room following the onsite event for medical interpreters.

### **3 Each participating member moves toward attaining the goals of the project**

All the participating members were passionate about the importance of medical interpretation and this project. The pandemic led us to take on the new challenge of going online, and by clarifying what can only be obtained at the front lines, we have found a practice method that is less burdensome for the medical front lines. We are in the process of exploring the online potential for experiences that are now only available at the front lines. In addition, we felt the need to spread awareness of medical interpretation within medical institutions.

At the same time, we will continue our activities to raise the awareness of the medical community and society through the cooperation of our members. One noteworthy example is the appearance on the famous TV program "Jounetsu Tairiku" by Kaori Minamitani, the deputy representative. Please also see the notes of one of the members, Professor Matsuzaki, at the end of this document.

### **4 Future outlook**

Now, the number of foreigners coming to Japan have returned to pre-COVID levels. During the pandemic, the number of foreigners living in Japan continued to increase, exceeding 3 million. It is also common for foreign patients who do not understand Japanese to come to medical institutions all over the country. Meanwhile, there is still a strong perception on the part of medical institutions that "foreign patients are a bother". There are some innate cultural and medical system differences, but most of these can be resolved by employing a medical interpreter. Forcing foreign patients to understand by body language and gestures alone is out of step with the times. It is a risk to persist with the wrong "accommodations" and "practices out of sync with society" of medical facilities and providers. This project has enabled us to establish a system in which medical institutions throughout Japan can provide appropriate medical care to all patients by utilizing medical interpreters. I'd like to express my gratitude for that.



**Hideomi Yamada**

Assistant Manager, International Medical Center,  
The University of Tokyo Hospital

**Project Title:** Road to a diverse society for all patients: Improving the quality of medical interpreters by establishing an OJT training system at medical institutions

**Author:** Hideomi Yamada, Assistant Manager, International Medical Center, The University of Tokyo Hospital

**Grant Number:** D20-MG-0028

#### **Project Abstract**

There are many cases of Japanese medical facilities with high hurdles for foreigners with different languages and cultures. A system for accreditation of medical interpreters to facilitate medical treatment for foreigners began in March 2020, but medical interpreters shall require constant learning for precise and correct interpretation. By establishing training opportunities and systems in medical institutions, we aim to create a symbiotic society that can also protect the health of foreign nationals.

#### **Awareness and behavior change through participation in this project**

**Makoto Matsuzaki, Toho University**

It was Dr. Yamada's invitation that led to my participation in this project. At the same time the project started, global pandemic began, making OJT virtually impossible. Although the promotion of the research was difficult, it is thanks to the enthusiasm of all research collaborators that we were able to achieve certain results despite the difficulties we faced. We were also greatly helped by the use of remote conferencing system, which has made great strides during the pandemic.

In promoting the training, we realized that we, medical professionals, need to know medical interpreters better rather than simply having them receive OJT at medical facilities. So we held a workshop at a medical education seminar at an academic society for health profession education in Japan with the full cooperation of Dr. Minamitani, the deputy representative of this project, and other collaborators. I believe it is a breakthrough from this research. I would like to make use of the results of this research to foster a better coexistence with foreigners in Japan.

## Why is FCE Needed Now?

To ensure that academic credentials and professional backgrounds of international students and foreign nationals are properly recognized

In today's world, where a variety of highly skilled professionals and students move across national borders, the proper evaluation of educational backgrounds and academic qualifications obtained in other countries is essential to attract talented personnel. This report introduces our joint research to establish proper evaluation standards in Japan.



SIIEJ 2022 (Summer Institute on International Education, Japan) held at Kansai University. A joint workshop was held by connecting online with UNESCO's Bangkok office and other organizations.

### **1 FCE essential to the global competition for talent**

Foreign Credential Evaluation (FCE) is a system for evaluating foreign academic records and qualifications. There are specialized FCE institutions and expert staff members dedicated to evaluation in Europe, North America, and Australia. Unfortunately, FCE is not commonly exercised as an expertise in Japan despite the large number of international students and foreign residents in the country. With the global trend of increasing immigrants and students coming across borders, what happens if the education, work experience, and qualifications of those graduating from college in their home countries or with professional experience as accountants, nurses, etc. are not properly evaluated? Their accumulated experience, skills, and knowledge are adequately not utilized, resulting in a mismatch between their abilities and the work they do.

I have seen a case of a Nigerian university graduate working at construction sites as trainee. Even if he could speak some Japanese, the chance of him being hired in Japan as university graduate in white-collar position is likely to be quite low. Conversely, I have seen many cases of Japanese registered nurses, studying English for a while in Australia, and then starting to work as nurses there. In other words, in Japan, where FCE is not functioning, there is no established system to evaluate and accept people with a certain level of education and qualifications, so the country loses talent to those where the FCE system is functioning.

### **2 Sharing awareness of issues among members comprising diverse practitioners**

Japan seems to have become unattractive destinations for talent or students who have acquired certain skills and qualifications in other countries. We, the project members, share a sense of crisis about this. In addition to researchers working on FCEs, the project members include representatives from the Roundtable on the Acceptance of Foreign Human Resources, the Platform for the Acceptance of Responsible Foreign Workers as well as the National Federation of Consumer and Industrial Organizations (Seidanren), which proposes the development of a system to accept "foreigners as consumers". Also participating are representatives of Nepalese residents in Japan and WELgee, an NPO that promotes career support for refugees.

### **3 The FCE situation overseas**

FCE has been rolled out to facilitate international educational connections at universities and other institutions of higher education to support the smooth mobility of human resources and students across national borders. For example, a person who has studied accounting for two years in Country A and transfers to a third year course in accounting at a university in Country B, or a person who has graduated from a bachelor's degree program in mechanical engineering in Country C and matriculates to a graduate school in Country D, will be evaluated to determine at what level their academic background is



equivalent to the educational system in the host country. There are specialized FCE institutions in Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand. Their professional staff in charge of evaluation are familiar with each country's education system, grading standards, and National Qualifications Framework (NQF). The knowledge and expertise required of FCE professional staff has become more advanced owing to the recent increase in the number of complex cases, such as people who have studied high school courses while moving between several countries, those receiving homeschooling or with other non-traditional educational backgrounds, and refugees who have completed higher education but do not have or are unable to obtain formal certificates.

While many countries have already developed FCEs that utilize digitalized certificates of academic records (e.g., diplomas and academic transcripts), Japan lags far behind in the digitization of certification documents.

### Australian Qualifications Framework - our assessment benchmark

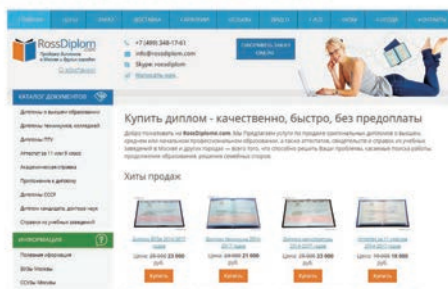


For information about the Department of Education's qualification assessments, see [www.internationaleducation.gov.au](http://www.internationaleducation.gov.au)

National Qualifications Framework (NQF) assessment benchmarks in Australia. A doctoral degree is rated on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest.

Source: Government of Australia

### Fraudulent Academic Documents



Examples of sites selling fraudulent diplomas and credentials

Source: World Education Services

## What's needed to accept foreigners with skills and knowledge

FCEs have grown in use for those studying in higher education institutions across borders. However, in Canada and Australia, which accept many immigrants, it is actively used to assess the academic records and qualifications of not only international students, but also those who immigrate as professional workers. Unfortunately, the FCE system has not been introduced in Japan for the evaluation of workers, although it is beginning to be

adopted in part to evaluate international students.

In our project, we conducted a comparative study of FCE systems of Canada and Australia, which are among the countries that accept many immigrants. In fiscal 2022, an online seminar for FCE practitioners was held at the pre-event of the Summer Institute on International Education, Japan (SIIEJ). At the SIIEJ main conference (held at Kansai University), a workshop on FCE practical application was held by the Toronto office of the World Education Service (WES), a North American FCE organization, and a representative invited from the FCE department of the Australian government.

Subsequently, in Japan, the needs of (1) foreign residents who are in the process of applying for refugee status in Japan were surveyed. (2) We are conducting a needs assessment survey of Nepalese residents of Japan and compiling a report. These two surveys focused on specific groups of foreign residents.

By the end of this project, we plan to publish the results of our surveys on the career development needs of foreign residents, which will lead to specific action plans and advocacy of new policies.



### Shingo Ashizawa

He is Vice President and a Professor of the Department of Global Communication at Kansai University of International Studies. He studied at Harvard Graduate School of Education as a Fulbright Scholar (Ed.M Master of Education). He has been in his current position since 2022 after working at Keio University, Osaka University, Meiji University, and Toyo University.

Project Title: Strategic Approaches for a Social Infrastructure to Invite Foreign Human Capital: Establishing a Japanese Qualification Framework (JQF) and Utilizing Foreign Credential Evaluation (FCE) Systems  
 Author: Shingo Ashizawa, Vice President and Professor, Department of Global Communication, Kansai University of International Studies

Grant Number: D20-MG-0072

### Project Abstract

We believe it is appropriate to incorporate the FCE system into Japan's social infrastructure for people with academic records and qualifications obtained in foreign countries to have their backgrounds properly evaluated. The project aims to present a prototype of FCE certification and a digital certification model by surveying actual cases of people from Nepal living in Japan as well as those applying for refugee status. Furthermore, at the final stage of the project, we plan to advocate for new policies for the effective use of the FCE concept.  
 Project website: <http://gccpj.recjsie.or.jp/>

# 2021



# Grant List FY2021

**Prototyping Financial Inclusion System for Financially Excluded Foreign Residents Based on Participatory Research for Financial Exclusion of Foreign Residents in Japan / D21-MG-0014**

**Tetsuo Kato**, CEO, REEP Foundation

**Survey on the Actual Conditions of Employment of Refugees Living in the Tokai Region and Efforts to Improve Their Working Environment / D21-MG-0016**

**Maho Hadano**, Coordinator, Door to Asylum Nagoya (DAN)

**Co-Creation Platform for Evidence Based Migration Policy Making / D21-MG-0017**

**Ryo Kambayashi**, Professor, Faculty of Economics, Musashi University

**Establishing a Multilingual Consultation Desk Network for Foreign Human Resource Inclusion in a Post-Corona Society and Developing a System for Training Professional Human Resources / D21-MG-0028**

**Rie Kuriki**, Director, Specified Nonprofit Corporation Resource Center for Multicultural Community Tokai / Project Representative: Yoshihiko Doi, Representative Director, Same organization as Rie Kuriki

**Issues and Measures for Human Resource Development of ASEAN Engineers Working in Japan / D21-MG-0039**

**Yuri Sadoi**, Professor, Meijo University

**Research and Analysis of Changes in Mindset and Behavior of International Students and Human Resources in Companies Through Mutual Mentoring and Systematization of Training Model / D21-MG-0042**

**Yu Shinagawa**, CEO & Founder, An-Nahal Inc.

**Development and Dissemination of a Multi-lingual Online Health and Wellbeing Information Crowdsourcing Platform by a Multinational Team - Towards Equitable Access to Healthcare / D21-MG-0045**

**Russell Miller**, Visiting Scientist, Department of Community and Global Health, The University of Tokyo



## Seeking to Change the Unfavorable Financial Treatment of Foreigners in Japan

In Japan, with a declining birthrate and aging population, foreigners are active in many areas, contributing to the economy and regional revitalization. However, there are issues with their current financial treatment, and I believe a scheme to resolve these issues would be beneficial to both foreigners and Japanese society.



Rino Senlewa (right) operates a coffee shop in Matsudo. With Rumiko Ishigami of Matsudo Tankentai Himitsu-do, which helped him open the business.

### **1 Foreign residents with outstanding talent are active in local communities**

An Indonesian who has become a part of the community development of Matsudo City. A Nepalese who opened an international school in Metropolitan Tokyo. A Thai couple who provides Thai vegetables grown in Ibaraki to Thai restaurants, which has become one of the staple cuisines in Japan. A young man of Brazilian roots in Hamamatsu who works as a firefighter... Their talents go beyond using their language skills to serve as a bridge between Japan and other countries.

I would like to introduce the case of Rino Senlewa, who came to run a coffee shop in Matsudo after meeting with a leader in Matsudo's community development. The coffee he roasts is so wonderful I heard that he has not only established a system to ship coffee beans directly from Indonesia, but also runs and is expanding his own coffee farm in his hometown.

Meanwhile, Nepal native Bhupal Man Shrestha publishes a newspaper for the constantly growing Nepali community. Furthermore, in light of the increasing number of Nepalese children, he opened an international school in Asagaya, Tokyo. He is not only trying to provide a bridge based on education to his home country and Japan, but also to nurture the youth who will go on to become global leaders.

It is probably difficult to correctly judge their talents simply based on a brief look at their personalities and how they are active in Japan. Japanese growing up in Japan have little understanding of how they were able to obtain what is "scarce resource of higher education" in their home countries, how much effort they spent adapting to Japanese lifestyles and continuing renew residency status, and how these leaders who have made it through all this can be supported by a network centered in their home countries.

The environment for the true expression of their talents within Japanese society remains inadequate. The question we posed in this project was what kind of financial environment should be provided for foreigners like them, who are expected to become new leaders of Japanese society, to live in Japan and continue playing an active role.

### **2 Turned away at the door and interest rate gaps: A double-layered wall blocking good foreigners' success**

With the support of the Toyota Foundation, we were able to implement a full-scale survey for this project. We surveyed several hundred foreign residents and interviewed both lenders and borrowers.

What we confirmed as a conclusion of the survey was the

unfortunate trend of private financial institutions refusing to lend to foreign residents. To be precise, the reality is that banks cannot lend to foreign residents without permanent residency or Japanese citizenship.

Furthermore, it became clear that even when foreigners were able to take out loans, they were forced to pay higher interest rates than Japanese borrowers. An interest rate gap of about 1% exists even when borrowing from a bank, while if consumer loans and credit card loans are used, they are forced to access financing at interest rates as high as about 3%. We need critical analysis, but based on interest rates for Japanese nationals, the interest rates offered to foreign residents are at premiums of about 33% for bank loans and about 58% for consumer loans, etc. Needless to say, this gap in interest rates divides the future for both parties.

For foreign residents, if they are unable to borrow money when something unforeseen happens, they will not simply be stuck in their lives, but will also be prevented from renewing their visas or obtaining permanent residency.

When we asked about the situation of lenders side during the exchange of opinions, the common view among financial institutions was that they can lend funds only until the expiration date of the visa renewal, and that even if the loan applicant had income, almost all would be ineligible for a loan without permanent residence status.

The inability to lend funds to foreign residents, despite many of them earning stable incomes, is an opportunity loss for financial institutions and an area where a new financial model is needed.

### **3 A fair scheme is needed for good foreigner residents**

A Canadian study (BMO Financial Group, 2021) conducted before this project found that foreigners who immigrated to Canada lost almost half their savings in the process of migration. Moreover, two-thirds of foreigners send regular remittances to their home countries.

In other words, some kind of financial investment is essential for migration and indigenization, and someone living with them needs to lend them a hand.

That is exactly why we seek to provide a fair financial environment for good foreign residents, as mentioned in the introduction. We plan for this to be either direct loans at low interest rates to foreign residents or the development of a guarantee scheme.

We believe it is not fair that foreign nationals cannot open bank accounts or are unnecessarily disadvantaged in terms of interest rates and guarantees because they are not Japanese or have difficulty with Japanese language skills. If there are good foreigners, we aim to create a society that is willing to provide loans and credit to them.



Coffee beans imported directly from Indonesia served at MAHAMERU COFFEE in Matsudo. Visitors are welcomed with an intense aroma as if you were savoring it at the local farm.



#### **Tetsuo Kato**

CEO of REEP Foundation. He was born in Osaka City in 1980. He started to work on solving social problems after the death of a friend when he entered a dormitory for children. He established the REEP Foundation after participating in the recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake. Widely known as a specialist on social investment, he was selected by AERA magazine as one of "100 Japanese Who Will Win in Asia". Author of "Changing the World from the Bottom" (Diamond, Inc. 2011).

**Project Title:** Prototyping financial inclusion system for financially excluded foreign residents based on participatory research for financial exclusion of foreign residents in Japan

**Author:** Tetsuo Kato, CEO, REEP Foundation

**Grant Number:** D21-MG-0014

#### **Project Abstract**

This proposal suggests conducting a comprehensive survey and publishing a "White Paper on Financial Exclusion of Foreign Residents in Japan" (tentative name). The project aims to develop and verify a prototype of a low-interest loan or guarantee scheme for foreign residents based on the survey results.



## Viewing Refugees as Latent Foreign Human Resources and Working to Resolve Their Issues

Foreign refugees have come to Japan for various reasons and are unable to return to their home countries. I will introduce this project's initiatives to improve the working environment in Japan for them as human resources, while embracing their situations and concerns.



A roundtable discussion conducted with Muslim women. They shared the challenges of working in Japan.

### 1 Background of project launch and two-year schedule

Following Tokyo, the Tokai region has the second largest number of refugee applicants in Japan. Approximately eight months after applying for refugee status, the majority of refugee applicants are permitted to work in Japan. Furthermore, after applying for and being granted refugee status or permitted to stay in Japan for humanitarian reasons ("humanitarian consideration"), they will live in Japan for the long term. Therefore, those who have fled to Japan as refugees can also be considered latent "foreign human resources."

On the other hand, there is no government support for the employment of refugees, and support for recognized persons is limited to the Kanto region. This project brought together a team who share a common awareness of the issues, including citizens' groups such as the Door to Asylum Nagoya (DAN), refugees who have received refugee status or humanitarian consideration in Japan, and companies and foreign employment support workers who have experience in employing refugees.

The first year of the two-year project was spent on interviews with refugees, companies that have experience in hiring foreign nationals, including refugees, and their employment support organizations. The second year will be used to test various action plans that will lead to solutions to the issues that emerged.

### 2 Issues revealed through interviews with refugees

A total of 16 refugees were interviewed about their work experiences in Japan, and their issues can be broadly categorized as follows.

- (1) Lack of appropriate support
- (2) Unable to get the job sought due to lack of Japanese language skills or unstable status of residence
- (3) Prejudice and discrimination against refugees and foreigners
- (4) Differences in culture and customs
- (5) Inability to depict a vision for the future of living as a refugee in Japan / Lack of motivation for self-actualization

The unimaginable experiences of those forced to flee their home countries, and the various barriers they encountered in Japan, where they fled to, and the discrimination and troubles they suffered were brought to light. This made me realize that this is not a problem that can be solved overnight. For example, some interviewees said there was a lack of understanding in their workplaces about refugees. Ms. F, who is from the Middle East, was told by her manager that her weak Japanese skills were a problem and that "If you came to Japan to work, you should speak Japanese."

When she explained, "I didn't come here to work, I'm a refugee." She was apparently told, "What's a refugee?"

In addition, regarding the issue of status of residence, most of the respondents had difficulty finding work under the visa status

of Designated Activities (six months, referred to as "Designated Activities visa for six months") while applying for refugee status. On the other hand, an advisor to the project commented, "The Designated Activities visa for six months has no restrictions on employment, which is a significant advantage for companies. Moreover, when we communicate about the fact that many refugees have a variety of skills, we get interest, especially from companies that are suffering from a shortage of human resources." Another advisor commented that if the risks of hiring refugees were overcome, they would be less likely to be turned away.

Through these discussions, we shared the awareness that we must work on bridging this gap between refugees and companies. Toward this end, we are currently preparing explanatory materials on refugees for companies, booklets on employment for refugees, and accompanying refugees on job interviews, etc.

### **3 For a society where refugees can live as their authentic selves**

In response to the question, "What are your criteria for choosing a job?", Mr. H from Africa replied, "I don't work in a job that I am passionate about like you all do, I work simply to survive, without knowing what the job is about. I had a business in my home country. Now I'm simply working for the money. In Japan, there are no opportunities for jobs that I can be passionate about." A refugee project member who heard this pointed out, "Japan's refugee assistance focuses on emergency support. Yet, refugees need more support to realize their dreams and aspirations from a long-term perspective."

Mr. A, a native of Asia and a nearly 30-year resident of Japan, is currently in a managerial position at his company. He commented, "I'm always thinking about the kind of life I want to live. There are some things I can't do, but I have worked diligently to figure out what I can." His words indicated to me that he has been working hard while envisioning "a step further into the future." In the second year of this project, we are also providing peer support for those who have lived as recognized refugees for many years and those who have recently been recognized. We hope that these activities will help refugees who will settle in Japan in the future to have dreams and hopes.

What we can do is to carefully interact with each refugee at the grassroots level and work to bridge the gap between refugees and companies and local governments to help resolve their issues. And I believe that we must steadily accumulate a track record person by person. Now in the second year, we are focusing on creating tools and networking for this purpose, in the hope that these activities will eventually lead to changes in the system and people's awareness.



Peer support with those granted refugee status several years ago and who have recently been granted status.



A seminar on working in Japan given by staff from the Employment Service Center at a local mosque.



### **Maho Hadano**

Maho Hadano is the coordinator of Door to Asylum Nagoya (DAN). She spent several years abroad during elementary school which motivated her later in life to become an advocate for asylum seekers and refugees. After entering university, she became more attuned to the asylum seekers in Japan and has run Japanese language classes, interpreted during legal consultations and translated documents to be submitted for refugee applications. She has been involved with DAN since its founding in 2012.

Project Title: Survey on the actual conditions of employment of refugees living in the Tokai region and efforts to improve their working environment

Author: Maho Hadano, Coordinator, Door to Asylum Nagoya (DAN)

Grant Number: D21-MG-0016

#### **Project Abstract**

From the perspective that refugees are foreign human resources, staff of the Door to Asylum Nagoya, which has been supporting refugees living in the Tokai area for many years, and refugees who have been granted refugee status or permission to stay in Japan for humanitarian reasons, have teamed up to listen carefully to the voices of those who have been granted refugee or humanitarian status, those who have applied for refugee status, and those involved in their employment.

## Analyzing and Presenting Data-Driven Recommendations on the Issues of Foreign Technical Intern Trainees

Unlike refugees, which are an issue in other countries, acceptance in Japan is proceeding in a manner that reflects the intentions of the companies and governments that accept foreign nationals. The following is an introduction of this project's initiatives to achieve sustainable acceptance in situations where individual circumstances are difficult to generalize.



A scene from a first calligraphy of the New Year event to promote internal communication at a company that accepts foreign nationals and was a research subject. Photo credit: Aioidenshikougyou Co., Ltd. (Koza-gun, Kanagawa Prefecture)

### 1 Insufficient academic research, unaligned researchers

I think that many among the public are interested in how foreigners live in Japan. Many researchers have long been interested in this area, as a certain number of them have themselves lived as foreigners in other countries. However, the lack of data (there are virtually no government statistics to help understand the reality faced by foreigners) and the issues of Korean residents in Japan are unavoidable when researching foreigners. Therefore, researchers did not form large groups to pursue their research, but rather, individual researchers continued their own research in their field of study in a small numbers. Compared to Europe and the United States, where immigration research is more popular, research on foreigners in Japan has not been as robust. Incidentally, the term "foreigners" has become increasingly diverse, with an increase in the number of foreign-born Japanese, foreign students, and technical intern trainees, as well as those from non-Kanji cultures. Particularly since the Lehman Brothers collapse, the need to organize in a more general framework has increased both in research and from a general interest perspective. Therefore, researchers began to recruit people with similar interests, although mainly within the scope of their own networks, and our research group was one of the first formed. Just as the overriding trend in the social sciences was growing awareness of the need for data-driven discussions, we were able to form a group of people who were

interested in the diversity of local communities, those involved in practical work, and those involved in historical research, which would not normally be possible.

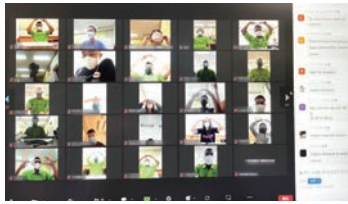
### 2 Issues that came to light at various front lines and through surveys

The purpose of this research was to conduct a follow-up survey of Technical Intern Training Program (TITP) trainees. In preparing and executing the survey, the process of accumulating peripheral knowledge was continued through preliminary analysis using government statistics, field tours, and interviews with concerned parties. At that time, the diversity of those who accept foreigners was discussed the most among us. This infers not only that there are foreigners with various visa statuses, but also that the level of awareness of the accepting side varies widely depending on the region, industry, and scale of the technical intern training. Put differently, we have come as group to have a common recognition of the risks of lumping together technical intern training.

Questionnaires conducted by our research group indeed vary in accuracy, but most are designed assuming a certain degree of logical hypothesis. This makes it less suitable for exploratory tasks, such as gathering information anyway despite lacking knowledge. That said, there is no end to the concerns about which hypothesis to design a questionnaire form should assume, and that is not going to be resolved now. Under such



circumstances, it is necessary to put aside the fact that the problem is already multifaceted. Yet I believe that it is because we have been unable to sufficiently abstract the intrinsic problems occurring in the lives of foreigners in Japanese society.



Japanese classes held after arrival during the COVID-19 pandemic. The course was conducted in the most effective way possible, such as setting up partitions in the class or via Zoom from accommodations. Photo credit: Worlding Inc.



Wearing matching shirts with company names while participating in a Sagami River cleanup as part of the community. Striving to conserve the environment as one of its residents. Photo credit: Aioidenshikougyou Co., Ltd. (Koza-gun, Kanagawa Prefecture)

### 3 Where does stress lie on the front lines?

My personal view is that the immaturity of academic research stems from the acceptance of foreigners in Japan in recent years being exceptionally "intentional." Usually, foreign immigration is dominated by people who are immigrating, and it is often depicted as an unstoppable wave crashing over the government and the accepting parties. Not only the immigration from Africa to EU countries, which has been widely reported on in Japan, but also the immigration to North America in the past are archetypical examples. On the other hand, the technical intern training and study abroad programs, which are now a major segment of the foreign population in Japan, are systematically characterized as a strong reflection of the intentions of the accepting parties, namely employers and schools. In this case, the individual intent of each acceptance is clear, and the front lines are less concerned about trying to understand the overall situation of foreigners. Moreover, when policymakers respect the opinions of the front lines, no one attempts to sort out the overall situation and mechanisms of foreigners. And as a result, problems are less likely to be shared by society at large. This is similar to the fact that it is difficult to design systems

based on theoretical thinking and a third-party perspective in the Japanese labor market and on the front lines of education. That said, since communication is centered on specific motivations on the front lines, it becomes difficult to share evaluations and improvement measures from a higher perspective. I believe this perspective is also effective in interpreting the problem of accepting foreigners. Normally, the motives are clear, so even if a problem arises, the path to a solution is relatively obvious and stress is not that great. However, with the TITP, there are notable cases where friction becomes excessive when there is a gap between the "objective" opinion from an outside perspective and the actual front lines.

Our research group's emphasis on data-driven discussions is not simply a matter of following academic trends but stems from the belief that it can lead to the elimination of friction caused by such miscommunication.



### Ryo Kambayashi

He is a professor of Faculty of Economics at Musashi University. He graduated from the Faculty of Economics, the University of Tokyo, and completed his doctorate in the Graduate School of Economics at the same institution. He has served as an associate professor at Tokyo Metropolitan University, a visiting fellow at Stanford University's Department of Economics, and a professor at Institute of Economic Research, Hitotsubashi University, before assuming his current position in 2023. His major publications include "Seiki no Sekai, Hi-seiki no Sekai - Gendai Nihon Roudou Keizai-gaku no Kihon Mondai (The Worlds of Permanent/Part-time Employment - Fundamental Issues in Contemporary Japanese Labor Economics)" (Keio University Press, 2017) and "Mohou-gata Keizai no Yakushin to Ashibumi - Sengo no Nihon Keizai o Furikaeru" (The Advance and Stalling of the Imitative Economy: Reflecting on the Postwar Japanese Economy" (co-authored) (Nakanishiya Shuppan, 2010).

Project Title: Co-Creation Platform for Evidence Based Migration Policy Making

Author: Ryo Kambayashi, Professor, Faculty of Economics, Musashi University

Grant Number: D21-MG-0017

#### Project Abstract

The purpose of this project is to conduct a large-scale follow-up panel survey for three years for presenting an overall picture of technical intern trainees and specified skilled workers as "residents" and "workers." Furthermore, through industry-government-academia-citizen co-creation forums and other dialogues, we aim to make evidence-based recommendations on how to accept technical intern trainees and specified skilled foreign human resources in a sustainable manner.

# Collaboration between Multilingual Consultation Desks and Welfare-Related Desks and Professional Skill Development of Counselors

Multilingual consultation desks are important sites for connecting foreign residents with their local communities. It has become clear, however, that it is vital for these desks collaborate with welfare-related desks to address to the complex and diverse consultation needs of foreign residents in detail.



Face-to-face training was held on the theme of collaboration between multilingual consultation desks and welfare-related desks.

## 1 Background to the project

In the multilingual consultation desk survey conducted in FY2020 (see QR code), one of the roles of the multilingual consultation desk was to "connect counselees to specialist institutions" and it was pointed out that "with whom and how to collaborate" was important. It also became apparent that while collaboration between local governments and international associations and collaboration with educational organizations are relatively advanced, there is little collaboration with welfare-related contacts. Many of the consultations received at the multilingual consultation desks are welfare-related, and due to COVID-19 pandemic, it has become vital for the welfare-related desks to support foreign residents. As such, we decided to conduct a survey and training on the theme of collaboration with welfare-related desks, asking the members who are familiar with welfare to join us.



The report on a survey of multilingual consultation desks nationwide conducted in FY2020 as part of the "Strengthening Project of a Multilingual Consultation Service System Through Public-Private Partnerships".  
<https://note.com/mrct/n/n5ef88a784c9f>

## 2 Findings from the survey of welfare-related desks

First, we conducted a fact-finding survey of welfare-related desks in Aichi Prefecture. We found that there are many welfare-related desks, and the fields they cover are diverse. The creation of the survey form was also a difficult task, as we had to determine where to send it, what questions to ask, and so on. We conducted interviews with welfare-related staff. With their advice, we prepared three types of survey forms and delivered them to related departments: one for persons in charge of community welfare planning, one for persons in charge of consultation services, and one for the social welfare councils. Unfortunately, the response rate did not increase as much as we anticipated. We regret that the reason for this may have been that we sent the survey without prior notice and without first having established an ongoing relationship with them. In addition, we also realized that the names of desks and the duties under their jurisdiction differ by municipality, making it difficult for foreign residents who often relocate, to know where to go for consultations.

Nevertheless, from the survey results, we were able to identify such trends as: "Many consultation desks receive consultations from foreign residents," "Multilingual consultation desks are not well known," "Many specialists are assigned full-time at welfare-related desks," and "Language is a major issue as well as issues related to systems and underlying cultural differences unique to

foreign residents". Based on these results, we plan to study how multilingual consultation desks can collaborate with welfare-related desks.

### **3 Training sessions with participation of staff in charge of welfare-related consultation desks**

As in the previous year, training was conducted with combination of on-demand, online, and face-to-face formats. On-demand content can now be viewed in seven languages (Japanese, Portuguese, English, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and Nepali), more languages than before.

This time, we publicized our content not only to counselors at multilingual consultation desks, but also to those at welfare-related desks. Even for consultation on the same topic, a counselor at a multilingual consultation desk and a counselor at a welfare-related desk respond to the counselees differently. One respondent commented, "Counselors at multilingual consultation desks think first about where to connect the counselee to, whereas those at welfare-related desks think about how to solve the problem". We believe it is important for counselors with such differences to understand each other and build face-to-face relationships through training.

After the first training sessions (held in April–May 2023), some participants said that the online course should be divided into one for multilingual consultation desks and the other for welfare-related desks. Based on this feedback, the second sessions (scheduled for January–February 2024) will feature different online courses tailored to the target audience.



Training on how to respond during consultations conducted through role-playing

### **4 Next steps**

The results of this year's survey have also been compiled into a report posted on our website\*.

Based on the results of the two surveys, including the previous project, we will further study the role of multilingual consultation desks in the community and how collaboration should be. We would like to discuss linkages with NPOs and NGOs as well as with welfare-related desks.

Regarding training, we will continue to improve the current training format and content while listening to feedback from participants and will also consider training not only for newly appointed staff but also for veteran counselors.

The survey results also revealed an issue that is difficult for this project to address, namely, "improving the treatment of counselors and interpreters." However, we believe it is important

to grasp the actual situation and demonstrate the reason for being of consultation desks.

Consultation desks are an important site for connecting foreign residents with their local communities. In particular, multilingual consultation desks have accumulated knowledge and know-how concerning foreign residents. Through this project, I have again realized that if they can collaborate with welfare-related consultation desks, detailed consultation services can be offered to foreign residents who have complex and diverse problems. I would like to further promote the project through discussions with our members to create a multicultural community.

\*Welfare-related consultation desk survey  
<https://note.com/mrct/n/ne87d816a698c>



#### **Rie Kuriki**

She is the Director of the NPO Resource Center for Multicultural Community Tokai. She was the former Director of the International Exchange and Multicultural Society Division, Aichi International Association. In addition to being involved in multicultural co-existence, international understanding education, Japanese language education, and volunteer training, she was seconded to the EXPO2005 Aichi Volunteer Center, where she coordinated and trained 30,000 volunteers for the expo. Since leaving that position, she has conducted research on multicultural co-existence at a graduate school, worked as a program officer for a foundation, and served as a part-time lecturer at a university.

**Project Title:** Establishing a Multilingual Consultation Desk Network for Foreign Human Resource Inclusion in a Post-Corona Society and Developing a System for Training Professional Human Resources

**Author:** Rie Kuriki, Director, Specified Nonprofit Corporation Resource Center for Multicultural Community Tokai

**Grant Number:** D21-MG-0028

#### **Project Abstract**

This project is a continuation of the project implemented in FY2020–2021. The project reviewed the multilingual consultation desk network and sought collaboration with related organizations. In particular, the project aimed to develop a model training program to foster the skills counselors need to be recognized as specialists. This year's survey and training were conducted with a particular focus on collaboration with welfare-related desks.



## What Is Japan's Role in ASEAN in the Intensifying Race for IT Talent?

In terms of overseas engineers, Japan used to be a country where "if you wait, they will come." However, due to dramatic changes, such as the yen's depreciation, compensation, and labor environment, Japan is struggling to compete for IT talent on a global scale. We have summarized the learnings and insights gained through the project.



At a working-level meeting between Meijo University and HTVJ of Vietnam.

### **1** A scene from the project start-up and conducting research

Our team consisted of Japanese researching human resource development in Asia and professors from major universities in Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Myanmar who have been involved in such research. Activities began in fiscal 2022 and are already making steady progress, including in the four countries mentioned as being in scope. Foreign engineers living in Japan were interviewed mainly by the Japanese members. As for engineers living abroad, surveys were conducted and data collected by survey teams from Japan working together with local members. We were only unable to visit the Myanmar due to the social unrest there, so we conducted joint surveys with Myanmar members who came to Japan as well as implementing online interviews and classes.

### **2** Key issues that were noticed during the research process

The following six key issues emerged as the project research progressed.

#### **1) Attractiveness as a labor accepting country**

The number of foreign workers in Japan has been increasing in recent years, partly due to the Vietnamese government's strengthening of its outbound labor policies. Japan is a work

location that many from Asian countries have longed to visit. But when I actually went to those countries, I found that there is fierce competition among Taiwan, South Korea, Europe, the U.S., and neighboring ASEAN countries for acceptance of workers. I am keenly aware of the need for the government to further improve the working environment and for companies to strengthen their post-employment management systems to make Japan a more attractive destination than before.



With representatives of Information Technology Manpower Joint Stock Company (ITM) and Hanoi University of Business and Technology (HUBT) of Vietnam. The author is second from the left.



## 2) Review of the immigration system

When we conducted a survey on the attitudes of ASEAN engineers, when asked what they consider important when working for a company, they responded that benefits, including living assistance, paid vacations, remote work, and other work arrangements, were given high importance along with job type and salary. The technical internship system, introduced in 1993 to accept overseas human resources, has frequently been criticized for its working conditions, deviating from its original purpose in some cases. At present, the government is expected to ease the conditions and conduct a pilot program in fall 2023 to promote the transition to the specified skills system introduced in 2019 to secure the workforce. Although it is somewhat late, it is important to appreciate the fact that this is being taken up as an important issue and to lobby the government to ensure that overseas human resources can work in a healthy manner.

## 3) Local entrepreneurship applying experience gained from working in Japan

I visited three manufacturing companies, three IT companies, and four human resource development companies as examples of ventures that were successfully started by Vietnamese in their home country after working in Japan. I learned that at manufacturing companies, copying and implementing Japanese methods in production, quality control, etc., is one of their strengths and leads to carving out new markets. I also found that IT companies can leverage the networks and Japanese language skills acquired during their time in Japan to increase their business earnings by remotely targeting Japanese companies that are promoting DX as their main customers.

This research was subsequently continued to survey 10 successful local manufacturing companies, in collaboration between local members in Vietnam and Japan. All of them incorporate the strengths of the Japanese system, but they are also agile and dynamic. I feel that the environment is becoming one in which local engineers can fully develop and demonstrate their skills in their home countries.



Visit to companies that have adopted the Japanese methods and are growing their businesses in Vietnam.

## 4) Enhancement of ITPEC

The Information Technology Professional Examination Council (ITPEC), which was established by Japan to attract IT engineers from Asia, provides a qualification equivalent to a university degree to those who pass its Asian Common Examination. This paves the way for employment as an engineer in Japanese

companies. In fact, this has given hope to Myanmar's youth, in a country where university functions were halted by the coup two years ago and has seen a surge in the number of private schools that help students pass the ITPEC exam. Since there are only six ITPEC member countries outside Japan, a future goal is to further expand the membership.

## 5) Need for practical Japanese language education

Japanese language education for foreign human resources seeking employment in Japan is also in increasing demand. Yet, from the viewpoint of an actual instructor, I feel that the emphasis on acquiring the JLPT qualification, which is the evaluation standard, has led to a bias toward memorization and results in a lack of the conversational skills that are important in the actual workplace. Aside from interviews, smooth conversational ability is essential for post-hiring training, meetings, emails, and other daily work, so I feel we need to enhance instruction for such skills.

## 6) Expansion of research activities to Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is a country outside both ASEAN and ITPEC membership, but is of interest as a research subject. Lanka Nippon Biztech Institute (LNBTI), founded by Japanese IT company Metatechno Inc. and the only educational institution in Sri Lanka for training IT engineers for Japan, received government approval as a four-year university in 2022. We plan to follow up on this as a new avenue of activity with the potential to solve Japan's IT-related labor shortage.



**Yuri Sadoi**

She is a professor of economics at Meijo University. She was born in Kyoto City. She graduated from Doshisha University, Faculty of Letters, Department of English. After working in the Human Resources Development Department of Mitsubishi Motors Corporation, she received a master's degree in international relations from Washington University and a doctorate (Ph.D) from the Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies, Kyoto University. She joined Meijo University in 2004 following four years as a researcher at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in the Netherlands. She specializes in development economics and Asian economics.

Project Title: Issues and Measures for Human Resource Development of ASEAN Engineers Working in Japan

Author: Yuri Sadoi, Professor, Meijo University

Grant number: D21-MG-0039

### Project Abstract

On the one hand, Japan is suffering from a shortage of workers, while on the other, ASEAN countries are promoting human resource development for Japanese companies. The development of human resources for engineers was anticipated to proceed smoothly, with the interests of both parties in alignment. But due to the political trends in each country and the impact of economic volatility in Japan, it is still a work in progress. This project studies the real issues from both sides of ASEAN and Japan. It considers and proposes the optimization of human resource utilization.

## Mentoring Changes Barriers to Foreign Human Resources' Success, Not Just Language

As the world competes for highly skilled personnel, it is essential to have inclusive organizations to unite a diverse workforce and achieve high performance. I will introduce some of the lessons learned from our programs with international students and businesspeople from Japanese companies.



Each participant shared their story at the beginning of the program during self-introductions.

### **1** Toward a society where diverse human resources collaborate

I founded An-Nahal in 2019 with the goal of increasing the number of inclusive organizations with a diverse workforce. We are working to promote diversity and inclusion in Japanese society in collaboration with a diverse range of partners, based on three project pillars: training inclusive leaders, supporting the creation of inclusive organizations, and testing hypotheses and sharing case studies through industry-government-academia collaboration.

The awareness on the part of local companies on the Japanese side after accepting foreign personnel is an issue that needs to be resolved, and one that we have considered important in the future of Japanese society since our establishment. While 70% of the foreign students in Japan at that time had the intention of finding a job in Japan, only about half, or 35%, were actually able to find employment. Furthermore, according to the "Survey on the Employment of Foreign Students/Highly Skilled Foreign Human Resources" (December 2022, DISCO Corporation), one of the top three challenges when utilizing foreign human resources is the lack of managers who can manage them in host Japanese companies.

Although there are issues to be addressed on the foreign human

resource side, such as language acquisition, we wanted to resolve the issue that the mindset and management skills on the Japanese side are a hindrance to their acceptance and entrenchment in organizations. Toward this end, we launched the Cross-Cultural Mentoring Program (MILE), which is the basis of our research.

### **2** Forming teams that allow for multifaceted considerations

The Cross-Cultural Mentoring Program (MILE) is an action-learning program in which international students studying at Japanese universities and Japanese businesspeople learn about mutual understanding and cross-cultural communication in a practical way through mentoring over about four months. The goal of the program is to understand the value of diversity and inclusion through hands-on experience, and to acquire skills in understanding leadership styles in teams of diverse individuals and creating inclusive environments in organizations so that they can become inclusive leaders in their own organizations. Also, it is a research project measuring the effectiveness of human resource development and behavioral change using dialogue and mentoring methods. This is an approach toward realizing a society in which foreign students and other foreign human

resources are active.

As I was seeking to advance my research, I met Professor Takashi Yoshinaga of Yokohama City University when I participated in an industry-government-academia collaborative project called "30 People Connecting Yokohama." While working together in the "Multicultural Collaboration" team, I, Shinagawa, decided to pursue the joint research, as we both wanted to take advantage of each other's expertise and take the collaboration a step further. Representatives of government-sponsored international student networks, career consultants, and companies engaged in similar projects in Scandinavia also participated.



Activities to experience the difficulties of cross-cultural communication.

### 3 What we began to see was positive change

The program has been held three times so far. We are examining the changes in participants' awareness and behavior based on pre- and post-program questionnaires and interviews. Many of the Japanese participants in the program had few opportunities to talk with foreigners, and even when they did, many of them did not or could not discuss in-depth topics such as their own values and thoughts on work. Conversely, while international students were interested in finding a job in Japan, many of them were anxious about it, including the Japanese language barrier. Yet, once the program began, positive changes occurred in both sides.

Through dialogue taking stock of each other's own values and ideas about their careers, the Japanese participants realized that they could understand the international participants and gain different perspectives through ingenuity, even if they could not speak English well. We have also seen a change in attitudes among international students, who have gained a more positive stance toward working at Japanese companies as a result of hearing about diverse work styles and career perspectives from actual Japanese people.

### 4 The importance of creating inclusive spaces

Our research focuses on changes in both awareness and behavior. That said, we believe that behavioral change requires follow-up observations after the program and ongoing communication from the program provider, which is an issue for the future.

It also became clear that what is important for both international students and Japanese participants to learn together is to create

spaces where everyone can converse as equals, including the language used, and where they can feel comfortable and be their authentic themselves. In my view, the mission of this research is to return and share the knowledge and ingenuity accumulated through the program to society in a highly reproducible manner so that it can be applied to other organizations and communities.



Group photo of program participants.



### Yu Shinagawa

Yu Shinagawa is a passionate entrepreneur focused on diversity and inclusion as a means to create a collaborative and innovative society that embraces individual differences.

She founded An-Nahal Inc. in 2019 to provide consulting and leadership development programs within companies under the themes of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. Yu also promotes entrepreneurship education for foreign nationals through partnerships with industry, government, and academia. She has been actively engaged in global talent development, education projects with international organizations such as the World Bank and has further contributed through an NPO to job assistance for asylum seekers.

Yu is also a 2019 fellow of the Japanese Women's Leadership Initiative established by the Fish Family Foundation in Boston.

Project Title: Research and Analysis of Changes in Mindset and Behavior of International Students and Human Resources in Companies through Mutual Mentoring and Systematization of Training Model

Author: Yu Shinagawa, CEO & Founder, An-Nahal Inc.

Grant Number: D21-MG-0042

#### Project Abstract

This project analyzes the changes in attitudes and behaviors of non-Kanji speaking foreign students entering Japanese universities and graduate schools and Japanese managers through a mutual mentoring program and proposes measures for career development of high-level foreign human resources in Japan and training of Japanese managers who support them. The project was initiated with the aim of increasing the number of inclusive organizations in Japan in which diverse human resources can play an active role.



## Aiming to create a health information platform that is equally accessible to foreigners living in Japan

For foreigners living in Japan, there is still not much information available in languages other than Japanese. We are a multifaceted team with members working in various industries, bringing their skills to the table. Here, we look back on the development of a new health information platform.



Enjoying multi-lingual cooperation online and developing the platform.

### **1 Project initiated by grassroots teaming**

A series of impactful moments has defined our journey, particularly as we witness the platform's progress during our monthly project meetings. Amidst these milestones, challenges have emerged, revealing the complexities of aligning the technical and academic aspects of our venture. Notably, our design brainstorming sessions and collaborative feature prioritization have required a delicate dance to bridge the exposure to respective technical jargon among our diverse team members. As we collectively pursue excellence, we find ourselves navigating the nuances of creating a working language that harmonizes our diverse expertise, ensuring productive communication and decision-making.

Amidst this journey, the pursuit of a certification as a Non-Profit Foundation by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government has added its own layer of challenges and opportunities. This significant milestone, achieved in August 2023, provides a legitimate foundation to bolster our long-term activities, bridging the gap between vision and institutional recognition.

Furthermore, our project has transcended geographical boundaries, sharing its essence across three international conferences through distinct academic connections. Notably,

our presence at events such as the American Public Health Association (APHA) annual meeting, Asia-Pacific AIDS and Co-infections Conference, and APHA Community Health Planning and Policy Development Mid-Year Meeting underscores our commitment to collaborative progress and learning across cultural, linguistic, and academic diversities.

### **2 Value of Collaboration and User-Centered Design**

Our teamwork has been crucial in keeping our project grounded in what users truly need. Dr. Aya Yumino, our lead in medical and welfare, has been a guiding force, reminding us how valuable the platform is in healthcare settings for patients and providers alike. Embracing a user-centered approach, we understand the ongoing importance of staying connected with our users. That's why we're committed to conducting regular user interviews, valuing their insights and weaving their perspectives into platform improvements. As we gear up for the platform launch, our dedication to user feedback and making constant refinements is unwavering. This ensures that the platform grows in step with the ever-changing user needs and preferences.



### 3 Future Pathways and Collaborative Potential

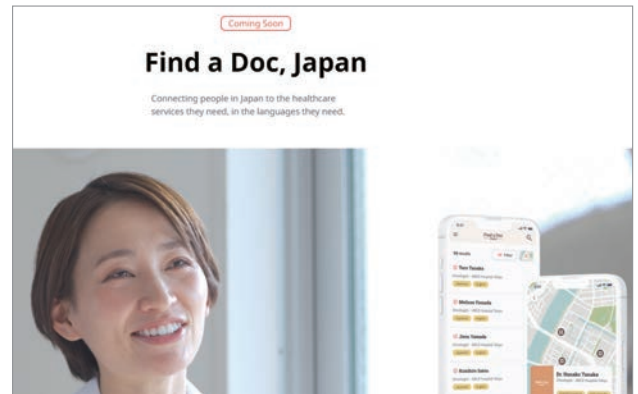
Our project's vision extends into the future, driven by the mission to ensure equitable healthcare access and promote information sharing. With this purpose in mind, we are embarking on a journey that envisions a multi-lingual online health and wellbeing information platform leaving a lasting impact. **Institutional Collaboration** will play a pivotal role as we form partnerships with community NPOs, local governments, and engage in public-private collaborations. Armed with a refined, ready-to-deploy product, we intend to initiate awareness campaigns that bridge cultural and linguistic gaps.

The expansion of our **User Base** is fundamental and will thrive through word-of-mouth advocacy and the expansive reach of social media. By forming synergistic relationships with medical clinics catering to non-Japanese speakers and healthcare professionals dedicated to diverse communities, we aim to foster a network of empowerment.

Our commitment to **Enhanced Multi-lingual Capabilities underscores** inclusivity. Through the recruitment of native language advisers, we aim to weave a tapestry of languages that effortlessly conveys health and well-being information across various cultures.

**User Feedback**-driven Improvements will guide our path forward. With user insights at the core, we are poised to make iterative enhancements, ensuring that our platform resonates with real-world needs. **Collaborative Research Opportunities** lie on the horizon, beckoning students and professionals from fields spanning public health, design, and technology. Through interdisciplinary collaboration, we seek to elevate the platform's impact even further. **Financial Aid and Grants** will be integral to sustaining our endeavor. In the coming phases, we are dedicated to exploring avenues that solidify the platform's longevity and efficacy.

As of December 7, 2023, the website is open to the public and accepts submissions and user Feedback at [www.findadoc.jp](http://www.findadoc.jp).



The Findadoc.jp website under construction (as of November 2023)



#### Russell Miller

Russell Miller leads healthcare content and grants for Find a Doc, Japan. As a health researcher, he works to better identify health disparities using social determinants. Committed to social justice, he envisions an inclusive Japan where diverse individuals thrive. Living in Japan for 7 years, Russell now resides in Toyama prefecture with his Japanese wife and son.



A snapshot of outreach like conference presentations.

Project Title: Development and dissemination of a multi-lingual online health and wellbeing information crowdsourcing platform by a multinational team - Towards equitable access to healthcare

Author: Russell Miller, Visiting Scientist, Department of Community and Global Health, The University of Tokyo  
Grant Number: D21-MG-0045

#### Project Abstract

Access to healthcare is increasingly predicated on the availability of quality information and communication technology. Despite the growing diversity of Japan, platforms trusted for multi-lingual healthcare in Japan are lacking. This project, by a multinational team, aims to develop an accessible platform for health and well-being information. The project entails four phases: multi-lingual expansion with quality translation, continuous optimization from user feedback, promotion through public-private partnerships, and efficacy testing in a randomized trial to improve local health information access for migrants.



## Publications

Online seminar “The Forefront of Accepting Foreign Human Resources: From the Field of Children, Employment, and Health”



Online Debriefing Sessions of the Projects from the Grant Program “Migrants and Japanese Society”



## Videos

FY2021



[Digest]  
S1: "Childrearing and Institutions"  
The Forefront of Accepting Foreign Human Resources



[Digest]  
S2: "Inviting and Accepting Human Capital"  
The Forefront of Accepting Foreign Human Resources





[Digest]  
S3: "Communication in Healthcare"  
The Forefront of Accepting Foreign Human Resources



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## FY2022



[Digest]  
S1: "Financial Inclusion and Changing Awareness"  
Reports from the grantees



[Digest]  
S2: "Employment Support and Human Resource Development"  
Reports from the grantees



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The full archives (approx. 90 min., Japanese only) and digest versions (approx. 10 min., English dubbed) of the online sessions are available on our YouTube channel.  
<https://www.youtube.com/@TheToyotaFoundation/featured>



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