

Achieve multicultural coexistence while maintaining one's own national identity.

Junten High School

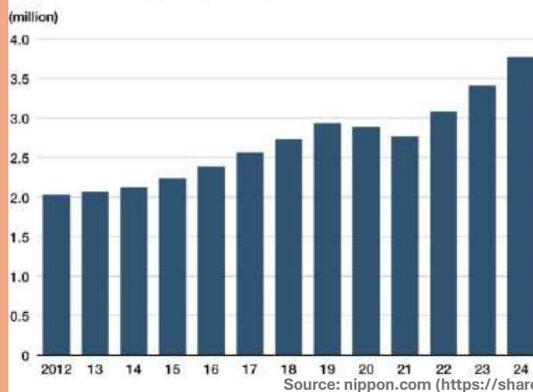
Introduction

In Japan today, the increasing number of foreign immigrants has given rise to various social issues. My research aims to create a society where people of diverse nationalities can live together in harmony while maintaining their own cultural identity.

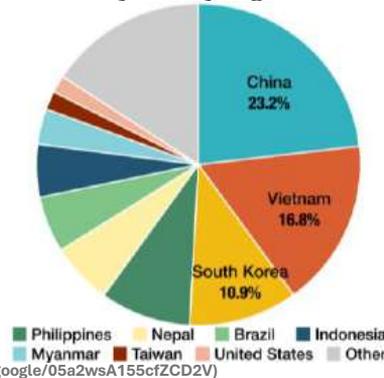
Present Situation

- Foreign residents in Japan : 2000 thousands (2012) → 3400 thousands (2023)
- The largest group of foreign residents in Japan by nationality is Chinese, followed by Vietnamese and then Koreans.

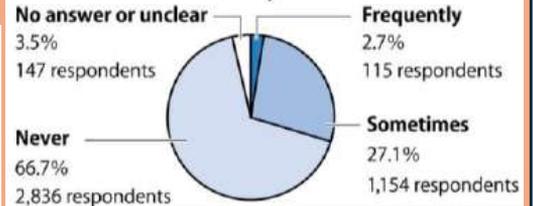
Japan's Foreign Population



Japan's Foreign Population by Country/Region



Those who were targets of discriminatory remarks in the last 5 years



Source: The Mainichi (<https://share.google/1CTUcRD4WANO3udYJ>)

29.8% of foreign residents experienced discriminatory remarks in the past five years - 2.7% frequently, 27.1% sometimes.

In the last five years, 48.1% of respondents looked for a home, and 39.3% of those were denied a lease for being a foreigner.

Past Initiatives

Our group identified communication gaps as a root cause of discrimination and friction, and designed an event combining books and cooking. Participants read together, shop for ingredients at local markets, and cook meals from different cultures, fostering conversation while allowing participants to share and maintain their own cultural identity.



We established accessible Japanese language classes for foreign residents in housing complexes.



During the summer, conducted field research in Germany and the UK. In Germany, I visited immigrant-targeted language courses (integration courses) and interviewed teachers, students, local residents, and staff at refugee support centers to learn firsthand about multicultural communities and support systems.

Integration Courses

- The courses receive financial support from the state, allowing immigrants and refugees to attend lessons.
- Children usually study German at regular schools, but during summer vacation, they can take the integration courses together with their parents.

Refugee Support Centers

- Challenges: language barriers, complex procedures, over-reliance on support, lack of self-reliance, misunderstanding of the system, reduced initiative.
- Remaining issues despite support: conflicts due to different cultural backgrounds and values, integration takes time, lack of motivation to integrate, distrust when the system is abused, skepticism about welfare system.



Local Residents

- There are some Germans who do not have positive attitudes toward immigrants; most foreigners respect Germany, so there are few major issues.
- However, government prioritization of citizens can make immigrant support insufficient.

Insights

- I learned in Germany prejudice and conflicts between immigrants and local residents were less common than expected.
- In Germany, even without German, immigrants can manage daily life in English, and language support systems are robust.
- However, language barriers still remain as challenges, causing cultural friction and difficulties in employment.

Next Step

As a future plan, a team of Japanese and foreign residents will work together to solve local issues within a housing complex. Unlike previous government-led activities, this project encourages residents to meet regularly and discuss community problems together. Through continuous dialogue, deeper interaction is expected to develop, leading to improved language abilities for both groups.

A prior example

"Creating Community Environments for a Multicultural Society" In this case, collaborative activities triggered natural conversations and led to the development of continuous relationships.



Source: Meijo University, UR Chiryū Project (<https://www.meijo-u.ac.jp/about/ms26/manabi/activity/No2020ur.html>)

Expected outcomes

- Foreigners: can consult about daily life issues and avoid isolation
- Japanese: gain intercultural understanding, access international exchange opportunities
- Society: promote multicultural coexistence ensuring mutual respect for each other's identities