

“Social Integration and Multicultural Community Building Policies in Japanese Communities” (Summary)

Section 1 General Introduction: Foreign residents and the response of Japanese communities

At the end of 2007, there were approximately 2,300,000¹ foreign residents living in Japan. The increase in the population of foreign residents has been rapid since the 1990 amendment of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act. It is worth noting that not only is the foreign resident population of Japan increasing, but so is the diversity of nationalities and cultures among those foreign residents. The differences between the quantity and composition of the populations of foreign residents in various communities also differs greatly and both the issues confronting foreign residents and the services provided by local government and NPOs, etc. vary widely in different communities.

In this report we focus on the policies and measures supplied by communities for the benefit of foreign residents and divide those services and the organizations which supply them into 4 regional categories based on the characteristics of the communities. We have endeavored to clarify the current conditions and issues faced by the 4 community types described below. The 4 regional categories were divided based on the composition of foreign residents and the percentage of the local population accounted for by foreign residents. 2 communities were examined for each regional category.

Four models based on regional characteristics and the communities researched

	Urban and Suburban Areas	Rural Cities and Mountainous Regions
Concentrated (A foreign population of around 10%)	"Urban Centers" Tokyo, Shinjuku Ward Kobe City, Chuo Ward	"Communities with Concentrated Foreign Populations" Aichi Pref., Toyota City Gifu Pref., Minokamo City
Dispersed (A foreign population of less than 5%)	"Suburban Communities" Tokyo, Musashino City Osaka Pref., Toyonaka City	"Rural Communities" Iwate Pref., Oshu City Shimane Pref., Izumo City

The services we examined were categorized as "Communication Support," "Daily Life Support," "Community Development" and the "Development of Support Systems." The suppliers of services addressed in this research were classified as "Local Government and International Exchange Associations," "NPOs" and "Immigrant Community Organizations." Research was carried out through interviews and the examination of documentation in order to clarify the conditions in each community.

Section 2 Current Policies and Measures and the Organizations Providing Them

The communicative support activities found throughout the four model regions; “the creation of Japanese language classes,” “the publication of multilingual informational materials about daily life” and “the creation of consultation locations”, were robust. On the other hand, other measures were inconsistent across the 4 regional community types.

When considering the characteristics of each regional model, the urban model communities featured numerous Japanese language classes, and consultation was available at numerous locations and in many languages. However, government support of the establishment and operation of Japanese language classes was scarce and indicated a strong dependency on the self-sufficiency of volunteer groups.

In suburban model communities, similar to urban model communities, the number of available Japanese language classes, and the locations and languages covered by consultation were relatively plentiful. In regards to other communication support measures, suburban model communities offered a more diverse set of services than rural model communities, but demonstrated a greater bias toward certain services than those offered in concentrated foreign population model communities.

The governments of Communities with Concentrated Foreign Populations actively supported the establishment of consultation locations, the establishment and operation of Japanese language classes and the development of volunteer human resources. There are, nonetheless, many policy areas that remain largely untouched, such as multilingual news broadcasts by radio and other media, orientations or opportunities to learn social norms and culture, and the development of interpreters.

In rural model communities, while the frequency of activities was low, measures were being taken that matched the needs of each community. As many foreign residents are inclined toward long-term residence, we expect a further assembly and organization of informational, human, and physical resources, as well as the networking of related organizations.

When observing the characteristics of the suppliers of services, we can see that the establishment of Japanese language classes and their support, the provision of multilingual informational materials and the provision of multilingual counseling was handled by local government and international exchange foundations across all regional models. The Suburban Community models were noteworthy for their NPO and volunteer activities, while immigrant community organizations were active in the Urban Center model Communities. Policies on the promotion of multicultural community building were being created in communities from each regional model, but it was also clear that creative efforts to include foreign residents in that process were stalled.

Major issues in the future include community building that looks past ethnic differences in Urban Center Communities and the expansion of Japanese language acquisition opportunities Communities with Concentrated Foreign Populations. For Rural Communities and Suburban Communities native language and culture education and support for the creation of communities were issues of note.

Section 3 Future Directions for this Research

Through this research an overview of the measures and policies in each regional community type has become clear. We have also gained a clear view of the differences in the existence of service providers between each region type. We can see which policies and measures merit expansion and which characteristics of service providers should be developed.

In the following fiscal year we will focus on the foreign resident side or demand side of foreign resident services. (Demand refers to the issues and needs of foreign residents.) By examining disparities between the supply side, (the measures and policies of

service providers,) and the demand side, we can verify the viability of our regional community models and through comparison with foreign case communities we can verify the global applicability of our regional community models. Specifically, we plan to perform equivalent research activities in 4 European communities corresponding with our regional community models. Furthermore, in this research we are looking at the communities of Ansan-city, Korea and Duisburg, Germany that were targeted by our preliminary research from the same perspective as we examined our 8 Japanese communities and we are providing this evaluation for additional reference materials.

It is our goal to attempt a regional model for local governments and NPOs to assist them in the "formation of multicultural communities" that will be a common issue, not only in Japan, but across Asia in the future.

An overview of this research project is available here:
<http://blog.canpan.info/jinkou/archive/10>

ⁱ Persons with foreign citizenship who are in Japan for over 90 days must register with the local government office. 2,080,000 foreigners have gone through the "alien registration" procedure. Based on immigration control statistics, the estimated number of foreigners who remain in Japan without registering is 150,000 people. Both of these statistics are from the Ministry of Justice Immigration Control Bureau.