



National government support for local government cooperation toward an intercultural society

Thursday, February 13, 2025

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Promotion of Intercultural Cohesion Measures in Local Areas

- In order to contribute to the formulation of guidelines and plans for the promotion of intercultural cohesion in local governments, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications has formulated the “Intercultural Cohesion Promotion Plan in Local Areas” and created the “Intercultural Cohesion Case Studies” which gathered good examples of efforts related intercultural cohesion throughout the country to promote intercultural cohesion measures in local areas.

Intercultural Cohesion Promotion Plan in Local Areas(FY2020)

- Revised in September 2020 in light of changes in the socioeconomic situation, such as the increase and multi-nationalization of foreign residents, the establishment of a status of residence of “Specified Skilled Labor”, the movement to realize a society with diversity and inclusiveness, the progress of digitization, and the intensification of weather disasters

[Specific measures]

(1) Communication support

- (i) Multilingualization of administrative and lifestyle information, development of counseling systems
- (ii) Promoting Japanese language studies
- (iii) Implementation of life orientation

Specific examples

(2) Life support

- (i) Assurance of educational opportunity
- (ii) To ensure a proper working environment
- (iii) Development of support system for disasters
- (iv) Provision of medical and health services
- (v) Provision of Children, Child Care and Welfare Services
- (vi) Support for housing security
- (vii) Response during an infectious disease epidemic

Specific examples

(3) Raising awareness and supporting social participation

- (i) To raise awareness of intercultural cohesion
- (ii) Support for Social Participation of Foreign Residents

Specific examples

(4) Promoting regional revitalization and responding to globalization

- (i) Promoting Regional Revitalization through Collaboration and Collaboration with foreign residents' response to globalization
- (ii) Support for international students in finding employment in the local community

Specific examples

[Establishment of a system for promoting intercultural cohesion measures]

(1) Development of Local Governments

(2) Cooperation and collaboration with various entities in local areas

Specific examples

Intercultural Cohesion Case Studies (2021 Edition)

- Published in August 2021, based on the revised plan and including new examples of initiatives that address the impact of the spread of COVID-19 infections on foreign residents

[Major examples] () indicates the number of cases.

(1) Communication support (17)

- (i) Establishment and operation of centralized consultation desks (9)
- (ii) Creation of opportunities for exchange between Japanese and foreign residents in Japanese language classes (6)
- (iii) Creation of life design support booklets, etc. (2)

(2) Lifestyle support (53)

- (i) Pre-school classes, etc. (12)
- (ii) Improvement of the environment for the acceptance of technical intern Trainees (9)
- (iii) Training disaster prevention leaders (11)
- (iv) Introduction and dissemination of “Friendly Japanese” to Medical Sites (5)
- (v) Preparation of communication support tools with foreign protectors (7)
- (vi) Introduction of real estate business operators with multilingual support (3)
- (vii) Information dissemination using videos (6)

(3) Awareness raising and support for social participation (12)

- (i) Preparation of guidebooks for foreign residents and holding workshops for Japanese residents (7)
- (ii) Regional development utilizing key persons in intercultural cohesion (5)

(4) Promoting regional revitalization and responding to globalization (9)

- (i) Efforts by foreign residents in the tourism sector (4)
- (ii) Conclusion of employment support agreements between universities and Hello Work for foreign students (5)

(5) Establishment of a system to promote intercultural cohesion measures (6)

- (1) Establishment of a collaboration system for intercultural cohesion (3)
- (2) Formulation of guidelines and plans in cooperation with a wide range of entities (3)



▲ Consultation service for foreign nationals



▲ Training for foreign disaster prevention leaders



▲ Art project (workshop)



▲ A tour of farming experience by a company run by foreign residents



▲ “Local Japanese language classes” co-hosted by the prefecture and the town

→ We will continue to ask local governments to promote intercultural cohesion measures based on local conditions

Local Fiscal Measures for Promoting Intercultural Cohesion in Local Areas

○ Based on the “Comprehensive Measures for the Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Human Resources” (decided by the Ministerial Conference on June 21, 2024), local governments also need to take measures to promote intercultural cohesion. Therefore, the following local financial measures are to be taken.

<Non-consolidated regional projects>

Action items	Local fiscal measures
(1) Expenses required for the promotion of multilingualization of administrative and living information Expenses covered: Expenses for outsourcing interpretation services at the consultation desk, expenses for the deployment of translation equipment (tablets, etc.), expenses for the translation of administrative and living information, etc.	(Municipalities) Special revenue-sharing measure
(2) Expenses required for the horizontal deployment of examples of advanced local governments' efforts Expenses covered: Expenses for utilizing an intercultural cohesion advisor (travel expenses, etc.), expenses for attending an intercultural cohesion regional conference, etc.	
(3) Expenses required for the implementation of life orientation, etc. on loan to the community Expenses covered: Expenses for dispatching consultants and interpreters, expenses for organizing lectures on behalf of foreign residents, etc.	
(4) Expenses required for the communication of information to foreigners and disaster prevention measures for foreigners in the event of a disaster Expenses covered: Expenses for translating disaster and disaster prevention information, expenses for training human resources to respond to foreign nationals in the event of disasters, expenses for establishing and operating disaster multilingual support centers, etc.	(for prefectures and municipalities) Special revenue-sharing measure
(5) Expenses required for school enrollment support measures for permanent resident foreign children Target expenses: Survey expenses for the status of school attendance and commuting to and from school, research expenses by visiting and telephone, etc., implementation expenses for school attendance guidance, preparation and distribution of school attendance brochures, etc.	

<National treasury subsidized projects>

Action items	Local fiscal measures
(6) Local burden for the operation of the centralized consultation service ○ Local burden for the central consultation service operated by utilizing the subsidy for environmental improvement for accepting foreign nationals (under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice) [Reference] Subsidy rate: 10/10, operating expenses 1/2(2024 initial budget: 1.1 billion yen)	(Prefectures) Ordinary local grant tax measures
	(Municipalities) Special revenue-sharing measure
(7) Regional burden on programs to promote local Japanese language education for the acceptance and coexistence of foreign human resources ○ Local burden of the project pertaining to the subsidy for the project to develop an educational support system (the project to promote the creation of a comprehensive system for local Japanese language education) (under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) [Reference] Subsidy rate: 1/2(2024 initial budget: 500 million yen)	(Municipalities) Special revenue-sharing measure

■ In addition to the above, measures (for prefectures and municipalities) are taken to cover expenses* required for support for foreign residents, etc. in the comprehensive calculation expenses for the ordinary grant tax (expenses for measures to promote internationalization).

* Preparation of information magazines and pamphlets for foreign nationals, installation of information boards and signs for foreign languages, Japanese language courses for foreign residents, consultation activities for foreign nationals, international understanding courses for foreign nationals, etc.
(Prefectural use per 2023 measure base organization: 17 million yen, municipal use: 4 million yen)

Evacuation support for foreign nationals in the event of a disaster (Sogyo Gai No. 5, Sogyo Gai No. 102, National Research Institute No. 50, Fire and Fire Defense No. 220, Fire and Disaster Management No. 153, Fire and Disaster Management No. 75, Fire and Disaster Management No. 59, Fire and Disaster Management No. 492, Fire and Disaster Management No. 175).

- The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the Fire and Disaster Management Agency summarized the related measures and good practices of local governments, etc. as follows, in light of the fact that assistance for the evacuation of foreign nationals in the event of a disaster has become an increasingly important issue due to the increase in the number of foreign nationals visiting Japan, the intensification of wind and flood damage, etc.

1. Disseminating Disaster Prevention Information Tools to Foreign Residents

- In order to enable foreign residents to access disaster prevention information promptly and accurately, active information dissemination tools such as, "Safety tips" for Disseminating "Emergency Early Warning Mail" and disaster prevention and weather information provided independently by local governments should be promoted.
- The bureau in charge of the Basic Resident Register shall cooperate with the fire and disaster prevention supervising bureau and actively disseminate the information through of registrations, etc.

2. Implementation of Education on Evacuation Support for Foreign Nationals at Prefectural Fire Service Schools, etc.

- The Fire and Disaster Prevention Bureau of each prefecture shall cooperate with the Bureau responsible for intercultural cohesion (*1) and endeavor to provide educational and training programs for firefighters and volunteer firefighters who are in a position to support foreign nationals in times of disaster (*2) at fire fighting schools, etc. in order to provide.

*1 The Bureau responsible for intercultural cohesion presents candidates for instructors at the request of each prefectural fire defense school, etc. and each prefectural fire defense school, etc. considers incorporating them into the curriculum for fiscal 2025 and beyond, referring to the candidates for the instructor and the syllabus of the notice.

*2 This includes the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, "VoiceTra", an app that utilizes NICT's multi-lingual translation technology, "Safety tips" under the supervision of the Japan Tourism Agency, and various tools (multi-lingual fingerboards, multi-lingual labeling sheets, etc.) provided by the Society for Internationalization of Local Governments.

- Expenses required for the communication of information to foreign nationals in the event of disaster prevention measures for foreign nationals, such as the training of human resources to respond to foreign nationals, including expenses required for dispatching instructors, shall be subject to the special grant tax measure.

3. Implementation of disaster prevention drills and civil protection drills conducted by local governments, etc. to support the evacuation of foreign nationals

- Encouraging foreign nationals to participate in disaster prevention drills, etc., to conduct training on evacuation guidance for foreign nationals and livelihood support at evacuation centers, etc. in collaboration with local stakeholders, and to make efforts to the use of tools to support foreign nationals in the event of disaster
- Promoting the dissemination of "Safety tips" from ordinary times to visits to Japan and foreign residents, with the assistance of local officials.
- Expenses required for the implementation of disaster prevention drills for foreign nationals shall be covered by a special subsidy tax measure..

4. Promotion of efforts to support the evacuation of foreign nationals in cooperation with fire corps and voluntary disaster prevention organizations

- Promoting initiatives such as evacuation support for foreigners in fire brigades and voluntary disaster prevention organizations, etc., by referring to best practices and also utilizing support programs.
- Promoting efforts to deepen the knowledge/understanding of firefighting teams and voluntary disaster prevention organizations, such as training on evacuation support for foreign nationals, using training materials for training leaders of voluntary disaster prevention organizations.

5. Establishment of Disaster Response Counters for Foreign Nationals in Local Governments

- Establishment of a contact point at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and the Fire and Disaster Management Agency for consultation on dispatching lecturers to firefighting schools in each prefecture, UI/UX of VoiceTra and other multilingual voice translation tools, etc.

Survey on the Promotion of Intercultural Cohesion in Local Areas in FY2024

1. Outline of the investigation

- The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications has conducted surveys on prefecture and municipality **annually, focusing on the status of the formulation of guidelines and plans for the promotion of intercultural cohesion (whether or not the guidelines have been formulated, the reasons why they have not been formulated, etc.).**
- In FY2024, in addition to the status of formulation of guidelines and plans **in order to better understand the status of promotion of intercultural cohesion in various regions, municipalities are taking** concrete measures to promote intercultural cohesion (16 questions including 2 questions in 1 field) in 14 fields, including the consultation system for foreign residents, the status of promotion of Japanese language studies, and the support system for foreign nationals in times of disaster. Measures implemented by commissioning international exchange associations, etc. are also included.), prefectures are surveyed on the state of support provided to municipalities.

【URL of the survey results】 https://www.soumu.go.jp/main_content/000984025.pdf

2. Survey period and target

[Survey period] August 30 to October 16, 2024

[Subject of Survey] Total of 47 prefectures and 1741 municipalities (response rate: 100.0%)

3. Example of new survey measures <Municipality>

Q. Please answer the questions regarding the consultation system for foreign residents.

1. Consultation services using automatic translators are provided at one or more contact points within the agency.
2. Multilingual telephone responses (including three-way interpretation using videophone calls and tablets) are provided at one or more contact points within the agency.
3. Counseling services are provided at one or more points of contact within the agency with an interpreter.
4. We are engaged in training to provide consultation services for foreign nationals (such as easy-to-understand Japanese language training) to counter staff.
5. The Ministry of Justice has established a one-stop contact point for responding to foreign residents, utilizing subsidies for improving the environment for accepting foreign residents.
6. There is no effort.

Q. Please answer regarding the status of securing educational opportunities for foreign children (1)

1. When a foreign national with a child of school age conducts resident registration procedures, information on enrollment is also provided.
2. School enrollment information is sent to families whose primary and secondary schools have foreigners of a certain age.
3. Information on the enrollment guide and the school attendance assistance system, etc. is sent in multiple languages.
4. Pre-school orientation, guidance, and consultation for parents and guardians are provided in multiple languages.
5. From the perspective of encouraging students to enter high schools, multilingual career briefings are held for foreign students and parents.
6. There is no effort.

* Multiple answers are allowed for both.

Survey on the Promotion of Intercultural Cohesion in Local Areas in FY2024

(Status of Efforts for Specific Measures)

Provision of administrative and lifestyle information (Outline of Results)

- Regarding the status of initiatives, “1. Multilingualization of HP” is the most common with 71.6%, “2. Multilingualization of information and flyers, etc.” and “4. Multilingualization of public facilities, etc.” is just under 30%, “3. timely dissemination through SNS, etc.” is 16.3% and “5. Establishment of in-house guidelines, etc.” is 4.4%.
- The number of events is highest for one-measure organizations (41.9%), two-measure organizations (19.1%), three-measure organizations (10.9%), four-measure organizations (7.3%), and five-measure organizations (2.0%), with 18.8% for organizations with no implementation measures.

Survey measures

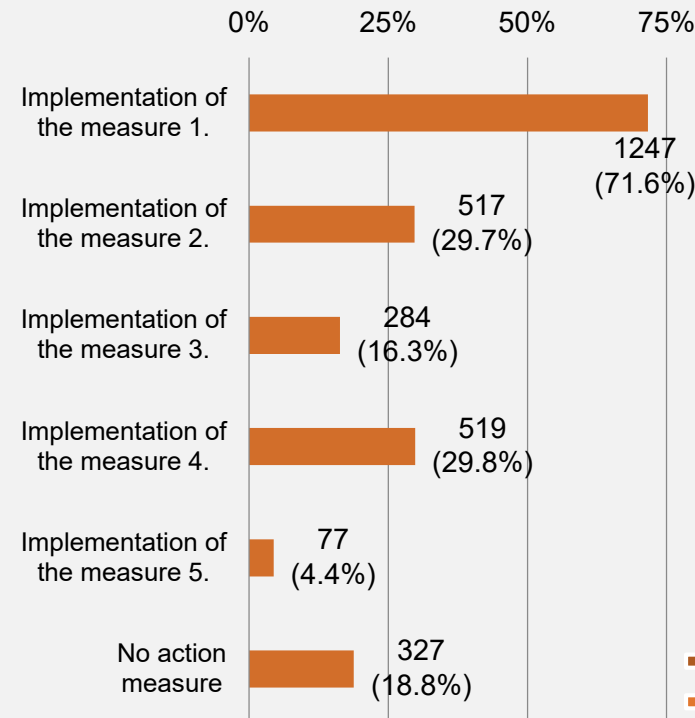
Q1 Please answer regarding the provision of administrative and lifestyle information to foreign residents

- The website is in multiple languages (including friendly Japanese) displayed (including machine translation and automatic translation).
- Information on administrative procedures, etc., leaflets, and PR materials are prepared in multiple languages (not including those that are automatically and machine-translated), printed and distributed, and posted on HP.
- In SNS, chatbots, apps, and other areas, government and lifestyle-related information is disseminated in a timely manner in multiple languages.
- Multilingual notation such as guidance and the installation of signboards is being worked on in public facilities such as government offices and public offices, sports facilities, parks, libraries, public transportation, etc.
- Guidelines for the provision and dissemination of administrative and lifestyle information in multiple languages are being formulated.
- There is no effort.

Nationwide situation

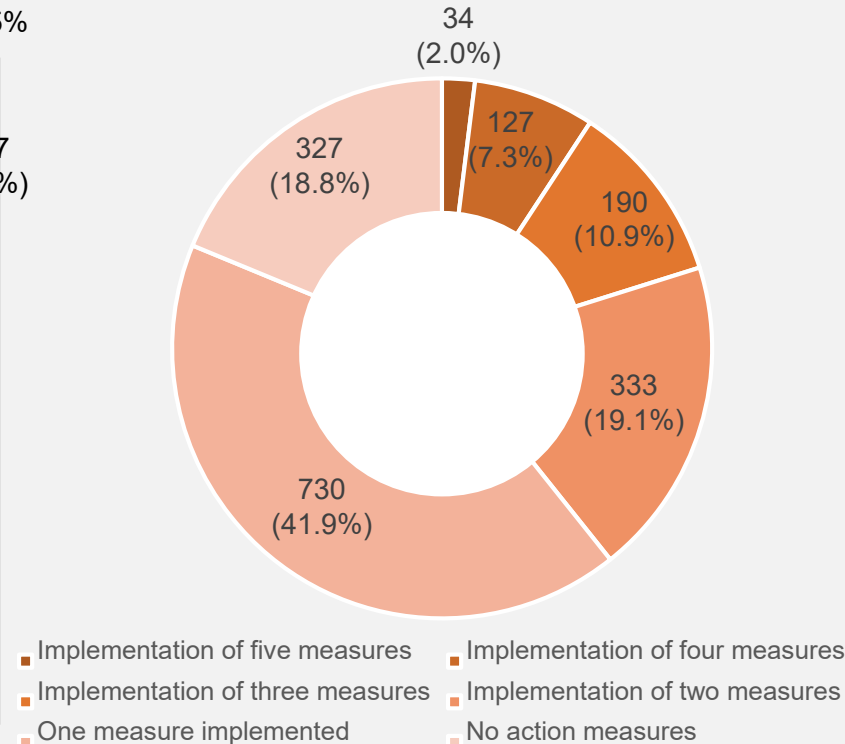
(1) Which measures are implemented?

(Number of organizations, %)



(2) How many measures are implemented in total?

(Number of organizations, %)



Survey on the Promotion of Intercultural Cohesion in Local Areas in FY2024

(Status of Efforts for Specific Measures)

Status of securing educational opportunities for children (1) (Outline of Results)

- Regarding the state of initiatives, “1. Provision of information on enrollment at the time of resident registration procedures” was the most common at 53.6%, “2. Sending of information on enrollment” was 53.2%, “3. Provision of information on enrollment in multiple languages and education assistance system, etc.” was 14.2%, “4. Implementation of orientation before enrollment in multiple languages, etc.” was 9.8%, “5. Holding of course briefings in multiple languages, etc.” was 7.9%.
- The number of events is highest for two-measure organizations (30.6%), for one-measure organizations (20.1%), for three-measure organizations (8.7%), for four-measure organizations (3.9%), and for five-measure organizations (3.2%), with 33.6% for organizations with no implementation measures.

Survey measures

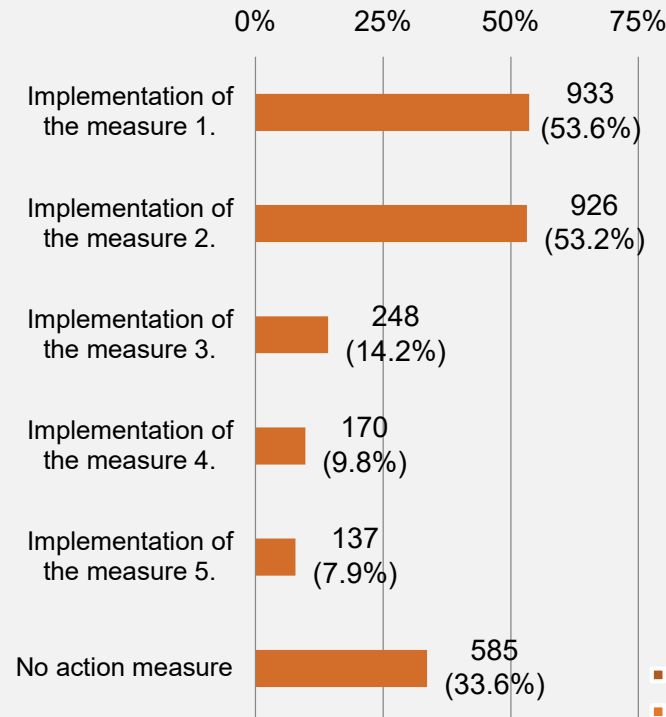
Q5 Please answer regarding the status of securing educational opportunities for foreign children (1)

- When a foreign national with a child of school age conducts resident registration procedures, information on enrollment is also provided.
- School enrollment information is sent to families whose primary and secondary schools have foreigners of a certain age.
- Information on the enrollment guide and the schooling assistance system, etc. are sent in multiple languages.
- Pre-school orientation, guidance, and consultation for parents and guardians are provided in multiple languages.
- From the perspective of encouraging students to enter high schools, multilingual career briefings are held for foreign students and parents.
- There is no effort.

Nationwide situation

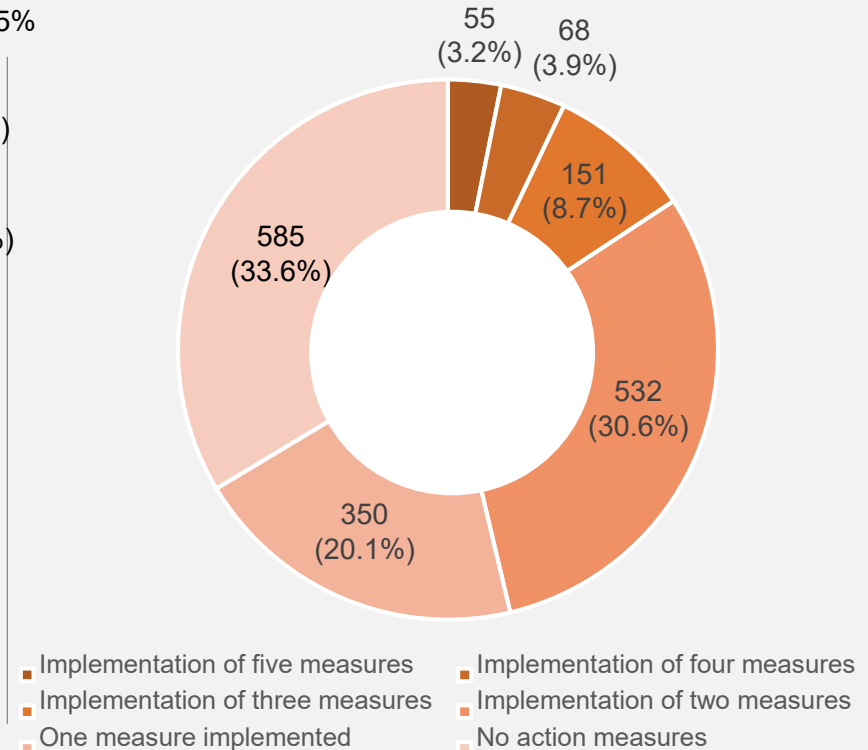
(1) Which measures are implemented?

(Number of organizations, %)



(2) How many measures are implemented in total?

(Number of organizations, %)



Survey on the Promotion of Intercultural Cohesion in Local Areas in FY2024 (Status of Efforts for Specific Measures)

Regional revitalization and globalization (Outline of Results)

- Regarding the status of initiatives, “1. Regional revitalization, etc. using the knowledge and know-how of foreign residents” was the most common at 18.2%, “2. Provision of opportunities for exchange for foreign students” was 15.0%, “3. Support for foreign students to improve their Japanese language skills, etc.” was 8.6%.
- The number of events was highest for one-measure organizations (30.9%), followed by two-measure organizations (3.7%), and three-measure organizations (1.1%), with 64.2% for organizations with no implementation measures.

Survey measures

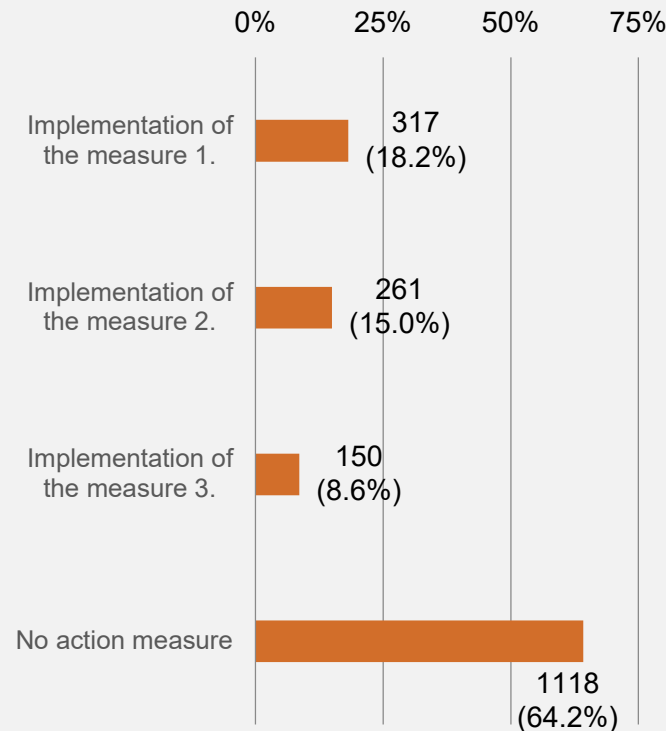
Q15 Please answer about the progress of regional revitalization and responses to globalization.

- Efforts are being made to revitalize local communities and promote tourism by utilizing the knowledge, know-how, and networks of foreign residents.
- It provides international students with daily life support and a place to interact with local residents.
- Efforts are being made to promote the employment of international students by supporting the improvement of Japanese language skills and holding job fairs.
- There is no effort.

Nationwide situation

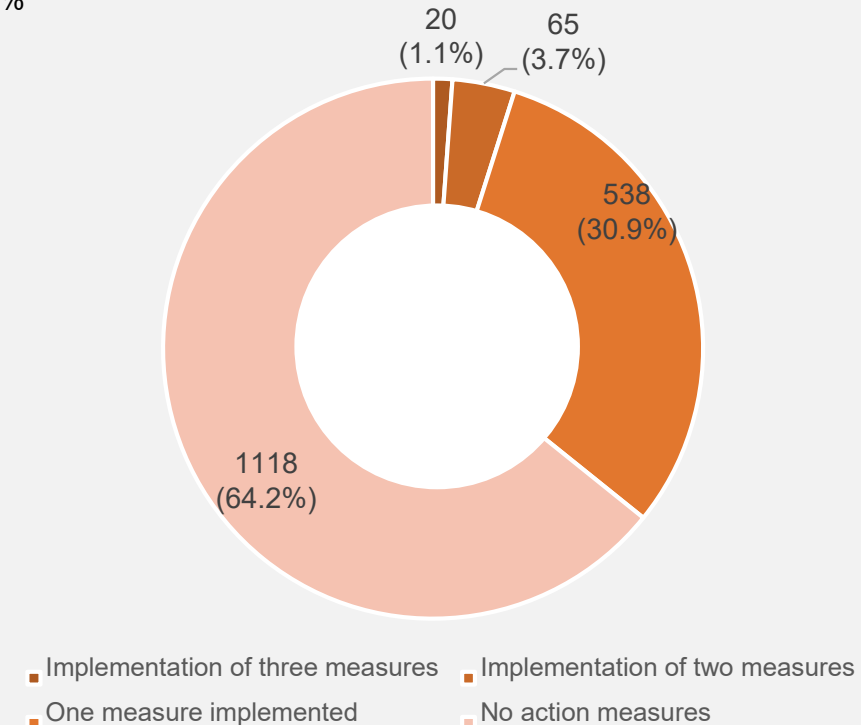
(1) Which measures are implemented?

(Number of organizations, %)



(2) How many measures are implemented in total?

(Number of organizations, %)



Survey on the Status of Promotion of Intercultural Cohesion in Local Areas in FY2024

Prefectural support to municipalities, etc.

- As support measures for municipalities in the region, many prefectures have implemented the “Friendly Japanese Language Training” for **municipal officials**, etc. **who have many opportunities to come into contact with foreign residents, the establishment of a council for information-sharing, etc. with municipal officials in the region concerning the acceptance of foreign human resources and the promotion of a harmonious society, and the utilization of the indirect subsidy system of the “Project to Promote a Comprehensive System for Local Japanese Language Education” of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.**
- Other characteristic prefectures provide support to municipalities as follows.

Human support

- Implementation of **disaster-related support training** and **evacuation center patrol training for officials in charge of municipalities in the region.**
- In order to raise awareness of intercultural cohesion, **on-site on of intercultural cohesion** were held at municipalities and universities in the region.
- **Assign supporters and coordinators** related to intercultural cohesion **to help bridge the gap between the community and administrative agencies, etc..**
- **Dispatched advisory** to municipalities **to promote the active participation of foreign human resources and intercultural cohesion.**
- Implementation of **Intercultural Cohesion Coordinator** and **Intercultural Kids Coordinator Training** for municipal officials.

Support for goods

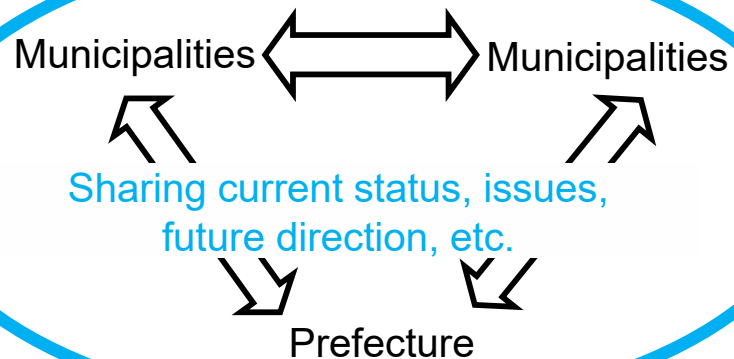
- In anticipation of utilization in municipal HP and e-advertising, **a video for enlightenment on of intercultural cohesion was created and distributed to municipal officials.**
- A **municipality** to create **a lifestyle information guidebook for foreign residents** in multiple languages.
- A council was established to share **information with municipal officials in the region and other relevant parties regarding** of consultation cases from **foreign residents.**
- A **handbook for the smooth of medical examinations** by foreigners was prepared and distributed to **municipalities.**
- Created **Handbook** in for first-time administrators of Japanese language education in **region.**
- **created a** of digital-learning materials for Japanese-language students.
- Prepared a for **municipalities to provide guidance on of promoting support for foreigners** in the event of an HP.

Financial support

- Implementation of subsidized projects to support the dissemination and enlightenment of **“friendly Japanese” by enterprises with business establishments in municipalities and regions in the region.**
- A subsidy project was implemented for modelled efforts to provide integrated support for foreign students who are graduates of foreign schools and other foreign nationals who are **seeking to work in the region, from Japanese language education to employment and retention.**
- In order to promote the enrollment of foreign students in the region, a subsidy for school enrollment promotion activities conducted by **NPO corporations, etc. operating beyond municipalities in the region was implemented.**
- Implementation of **subsidy** for municipal projects related to **promote exchanges between residents in areas and foreign residents, and awareness raising and cultivation** for of intercultural cohesion.

Intercultural Cohesion regional conference

- “Intercultural Cohesion Regional Conferences” for municipalities in the region will be held by prefectures (regional blocks or multiple prefectures may be held jointly) to share the current status, issues, and future direction of intercultural cohesion in local areas.
- This conference aims to further promote intercultural cohesion measures in local areas lectures by experts and intercultural cohesion advisors and introductions of advanced cases. It has been held since FY2019.



Advice and support

Information sharing

Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
(including experts and intercultural cohesion advisors)

Meetings

FY2022

Held online or face-to-face on a regional block basis, taking into account the impact of COVID-19.
[Host organization] Aomori, Chiba, Mie, Nara, Yamaguchi and Saga prefectures (6 blocks nationwide)

[Details of the meeting]

Introduction of intercultural cohesion measures in each prefecture
Introduction of Intercultural Cohesion Measures by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and Related Ministries and Agencies
Keynote speeches by experts, introductions of advanced cases, and exchanges of opinions

FY2023

Held online or face-to-face on a regional block basis, taking into account the impact of COVID-19.
[Host organization] Iwate, Tochigi, Fukui, Wakayama, Hiroshima, and Okinawa (six blocks nationwide)

[Details of the meeting]

Introduction of intercultural cohesion measures in each prefecture
Introduction of Intercultural Cohesion Measures by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and Related Ministries and Agencies
Keynote speeches by experts, introductions of advanced cases, and exchanges of opinions

FY2024

Held online or face-to-face on a regional block basis, taking into account the impact of COVID-19.
[Host organization] Miyagi, Gunma, Aichi, Hyogo, Tokushima, and Oita prefectures (six blocks nationwide)

[Details of the meeting]

Introduction of intercultural cohesion measures in each prefecture
Introduction of Intercultural Cohesion Measures by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications and Related Ministries and Agencies
Keynote speeches by experts, introductions of advanced cases, and exchanges of opinions

- subject to the special grant tax measure with **expenses (participation fees) required for the holding of intercultural cohesion regional conferences in municipalities**

Examples of collaboration between local governments (e.g., collaborative core urban areas) - Consultation Service for Foreigners in Kurashiki and Takahashi River Basin-

No.93 Kurashiki, [Okayama]

Consultation Service for Foreigners in Kurashiki and Takahashi River Basin

Keywords : Multilingual support, consultation service, wide-area cooperation among local governments, utilization of ICT

Background

Seven cities and three towns in the Takahashi River Basin have been promoting various efforts under the "Vision for Growth Strategy in the Takahashi River Basin" since FY2015, including the improvement of life-related functional services for the entire region. The percentage of foreign residents living in the region is 1.53% of the total population, which is lower than the national average but has been on an increasing trend in recent years. As the necessity of establishing multilingual consultation desks to respond to the increase in the number of foreign residents has been recognized, the Government has positioned the multilingual consultation desks as measures to improve services to the region, and has examined the possibility of widely using the consultation desks newly established in Kurashiki City (hereinafter referred to as the "Consultation Desks") as a part of the collaborative core metropolitan area project for the consultation services of foreign residents in the region in general.

<Kurashiki City, Okayama Prefecture>

Population: 481,537 (1,354 persons/km²)

Main industry: Manufacturing industry

Foreign population: 6,843 (1.42%)

Countries and regions of foreigners

- (1) Vietnam
- (2) South Korea
- (3) China

Status of residence

- (1) Technical Intern Training
- (2) Special permanent residents
- (3) Permanent Resident



Details of initiatives

In response to the rapid increase in the number of foreign nationals due to the revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act in April 2019 (establishment of the status of residence of "Designated Skills 1 and 2") under the "Second Vision for Growth Strategy in the Takahashi River Basin" that began in FY2020, the establishment of a consultation desk was identified as one of the specific countermeasures, and was established in Kurashiki City in October 2020. Consultation desks accept life consultations from foreign residents by telephone or over the counter.

The corresponding language is total 13 languages. In the case of consultation at the counter, the counselor will directly handle English, Chinese, and Vietnamese language, but in the case of the other 10 languages, an external interpreter operator called from the counselor at the counter participates from the videophone of the tablet terminal and provides remote interpretation in real time. This allows foreign residents to communicate with counselors through remote interpreters provided by interpreter operators.

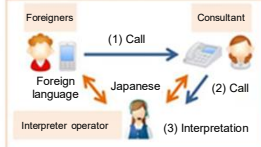
Consult at the counter

At the counter, there are counselors who can speak English, Chinese, and Vietnamese. Other words are interpreted by the operator using a videophone call.



Consult by telephone

Please call someone who can't go to the counter. A counselor who can speak English, Chinese, and Vietnamese on the phone will be available. Other words are interpreted by the operator.



▲ Consultation through a remote interpreter (excerpt from the leaflet)

Content of Initiatives (continued)

On the other hand, in the case of telephone consultation, the three languages that the consultant can handle are handled directly. In the case of other languages, however, the three-way call between foreign residents, counselors, and interpreter operators can be used to provide consultation in multiple languages through remote interpretation by interpreter operators.

This consultation service is available not only to Kurashiki City, but also to foreign residents living in seven cities and three towns in the area (see the points on efforts).

This consultation desk is established by utilizing the "Subsidy for Improvement of the Environment for the Acceptance of Foreign Nationals" provided by the Immigration Bureau. Since the Kurashiki City government, which is the entity that applied for the subsidy, bears all the expenses related to the establishment and operation of the consultation desk, no operating expenses are incurred by other municipalities.

Key Points of Efforts

■ Realization of consultation desks in areas

As a consultation service for foreigners through wide-area cooperation, this case was carried out as a concrete measure of the collaboration center urban area vision. Through regional cooperation, we were able to solve the common problem in the area of consultation service for foreigners beyond municipalities. It also contributes to understanding the trends and issues of foreign residents in a wide area including neighboring municipalities, and the accumulation of consultation cases also improves the quality of consultation services.

■ Elimination of language and distance barriers by utilizing remote systems

Within the area, visitors to the nearest municipal government building will be provided with a video-phone using a tablet device to provide an environment in which they can provide consultation services in real time while watching each other's facial expressions in multiple languages. As a result, it became possible for foreign residents to consult in their native languages at any time and to communicate with consultants even when the staff at the counter cannot speak foreign languages.



▲ Takayashi River Basin Cooperation
Central Urban Area 7 cities and 3 towns

Results and future outlook of initiatives

The number of consultations between October 2020 and March 2021 was 137, of which about 60% visited the consultation desk and about 40% were telephone calls. According to the municipalities, foreign residents in Kurashiki City accounted for about 80% of the total, and the remaining 20% were from other municipalities.

Kurashiki City International Division

TEL: 086-426-3015

URL: <https://wp.welltool.jp/kurakoku/> (HP on Initiatives)

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Collection of Intercultural Cohesion Cases (2021 edition)

Examples of collaboration between local governments (e.g., collaborative core urban areas)

- Expansion of “regional Japanese language classes” in cooperation between prefectural and municipal governments-

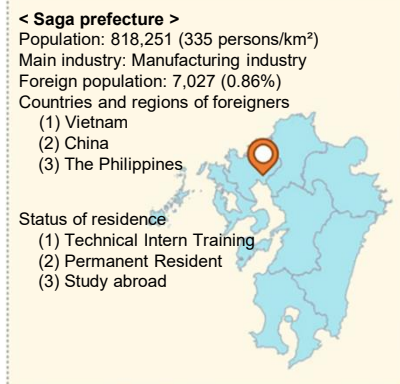
No.94 Saga, Expanding the use of “regional Japanese language schools” in cooperation with prefectures and municipalities

Keywords : Easy Japanese, Japanese language study support, collaboration with diverse entities, organizational and human resource development

Background

As a result of the “Survey on Intercultural Cohesion in Saga Prefecture” conducted by Saga Prefecture in FY2015 together with Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, it was found that people with fewer contacts with foreigners were confused about foreigners.

Previously, the prefectural government visited municipalities and companies to gain an understanding of the employment and living conditions of foreigners. Among them, local residents of both foreigners and Japanese people have voiced that communication is not being carried out smoothly and uneasily. For this reason, we believe it is important to create an environment in which communication between foreigners and Japanese people can be promoted smoothly in the region. Since FY2018, the prefectural government has promoted the creation of intercultural cohesion areas based on “regional Japanese language classes” while promoting the understanding of municipalities.



Details of initiatives

The prefectural government is working to promote the understanding of municipalities toward the establishment of regional Japanese language schools by utilizing the Agency for Cultural Affairs's “Regional Japanese Language Education Startup Program” (hereinafter referred to as the “Program”) from a wide-area perspective as a prefectural government, and is also working with municipalities that have not established regional Japanese language schools to develop a variety of projects. By FY 2021, six municipalities in the prefecture and in the province had received the adoption of the program. Advisors (experts) dispatched by the Agency for Cultural Affairs over a period of up to three years can receive advice on the establishment of Japanese language schools in line with local circumstances.

The prefectural government also holds annual explanatory sessions on the program for officials in charge of municipalities that do not have local Japanese language schools. At explanatory meetings, the program advisors dispatched to municipalities give lectures on laws and regulations related to intercultural cohesion measures and Japanese language education in the country, as well as workshops with advisors, creating opportunities for municipal officials to deepen their understanding of Japanese language education and intercultural cohesion in the region.

In these efforts, the Agency for Cultural Affairs provides information on cases in other prefectures and provides advice on the progress of the project.

In addition, the prefecture and municipalities are co-hosting “Easy Japanese” courses on a trial basis in cities and towns that are interested in establishing local Japanese language classes.



▲ An easy Japanese language course held jointly with Yoshinogari town

Key Points of Efforts

■ Raising awareness among municipal employees to promote the establishment of Japanese language classes

The prefectural government considers Japanese language classes to be an important place for foreign residents to learn Japanese, as well as to know the community and people, and to become a member of the community. For this reason, we are not only entrusting Japanese language classes to volunteer activities, but also aiming to position them as a major initiative for the future creation of intercultural communities in each city and town.

Based on this awareness, the prefectural government is working to promote understanding of the significance of intercultural cohesion among municipal officials and the necessity of Japanese language classes through such means as holding “friendly Japanese language” training for municipal officials, providing opportunities to interact with foreign residents, and sharing case studies of municipal governments with which municipal officials have established precedents at the Municipal Liaison Council on Intercultural Cohesion (meetings between departments in municipalities in the prefecture).



▲ Sharing examples of cities and towns that have already established Japanese language classes at the Liaison Council for Intercultural Cohesion

Results and future outlook of initiatives

As a result of encouraging prefectural governments to establish local Japanese language schools in municipalities, out of all 20 municipalities as of July 2021, five municipalities were budgeted for local Japanese language schools directly operated by municipalities, and four municipalities were working to establish them. Including municipalities that operate only as volunteers, 15 municipalities in the prefecture are considering establishing or establishing Japanese language schools, and five municipalities are not considering establishing them.

The prefectural government will actively support the promotion of initiatives by municipalities while repeatedly examining how to cooperate with municipalities and provide support. At the same time, efforts will be made to foster the understanding of top-level officials and key persons in government, local communities, and businesses, and to foster leaders of intercultural cohesion in local communities.

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Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Collection of Intercultural Cohesion Cases (2021 edition)