



KAKEHASHI Project

KAKEHASHI Alumni Study Program (Tokyo)

Follow-up Project Report

1. Program Overview

【Objective】 This program was conducted to gather past KAKEHASHI Project participants residing in Japan (from the U.S., Canada, and Japan) to raise their awareness as KAKEHASHI alumni and deepen mutual understanding and networking among them through discussions over two days of observation visits, lectures, and a workshop based on the theme "What we can do to make more people want to work and live in Japan."

【Participants】 Total: 18 participants from FY2015-FY2020 KAKEHASHI Projects residing in Japan
Breakdown: Undergraduate students, graduate students, and working youth from the U.S. (9), Canada (1), and Japan (8)

【Locations】 Tokyo, Kanagawa

【Program Schedule】

Feb. 3 (Sat)	【Orientation】 【Icebreaker】 【 Company Visit 】 Intercultural Integration Department, Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) 【Exchange Session】 Lunch with non-Japanese staff members at JICE 【Opinion Exchange】 Exchange with an alumnus of Japan's Friendship Ties Program working at a diverse company 【Observation】 Ameyoko Shopping Street 【Dinner Exchange】 Reflection on the program
Feb. 4 (Sun)	【Observation】 Minami Citizens Activity & Multicultural Lounge (Minami Ward, Yokohama City) 【Workshop】 An-Nahal (organization promoting diversity and inclusion) Discussion point: "What we can propose to the national government, local governments, and local communities, and what we can put into practice ourselves" 【Reporting Session】 【Reception】

2. Program Photos



【Orientation】 【Icebreaker】



【Company Visit】 Intercultural Integration Department, Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)



【Exchange Session】 Lunch with non-Japanese staff members at JICE



【Opinion Exchange】 Exchange with a highly-skilled foreign national working at a diverse company



【Observation】 Ameyoko Shopping Street



【Dinner Exchange】 Reflection on the program

	
【Observation】 Minami Citizens Activity & Multicultural Lounge (Minami Ward, Yokohama City)	【Workshop】 An-Nahal
	
【Reporting Session】	【Reception】

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Graduate Student (U.S.)

The program was only two days, but I really enjoyed it! Yesterday, we learned about the multiculturalism services provided by JICE. I was surprised to learn that these services are not only for foreigners working in Japan, but also for companies striving to diversify their workforce. I believe it's important to promote such services to make useful information more accessible to foreigners. Our trip to Ameyoko made us realize that even though people speak different languages and come from diverse backgrounds, they can work together naturally. Today, we visited the multiculturalism lounge in Minami-ku, Yokohama City. They organize various activities that bridge local communities and help foreigners lead more comfortable lives. I realized that communication is key to understanding each other and fostering harmony in diverse communities.

◆ Undergraduate Student (Japan)

It has been a great opportunity to meet people from different backgrounds and walks of life. It was a very important experience to listen to the real-life experience from people who have worked and lived in Japan. One thing I learned through this programme is that there might be blind spot that prevents me from realising the cultural gap. As someone who was born and raised in Japan, I may take many things for granted, but if I am not aware of it I may unconsciously be excluding those who are not familiar to the culture and unspoken rules that exist in Japan.

◆ **Undergraduate Student (Canada)**

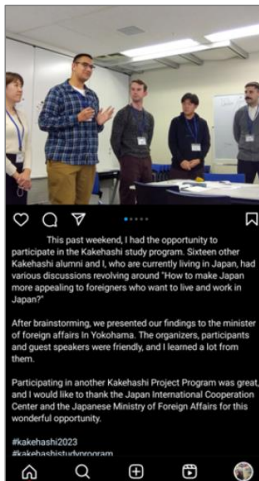
It was a very wonderful experience to meet so many likeminded people. If given the chance I would definitely want to participate in other events like this one.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ **Cooperating Organization**

Seeing as the program was geared toward alumni, it was wonderful to see KAKEHASHI Project participants gather together for the first time in many years and reaffirm the appeal of "cultural diversity" and "international activities." I also felt the strength of the community connection in the fact that such a large number of people gathered, even though time has passed since their participation in previous KAKEHASHI Projects.

5. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt)

	
February 3, 2024 (Instagram) Participating in MOFA's KAKEHASHI Project again 1 year later! This brought back memories of when I went to Canada as part of the KAKEHASHI Project a year ago! I met so many different people, and it was a very stimulating day! As an undergraduate student, I felt I still have room to grown.	February 5, 2024 (Instagram) This past weekend, I had the opportunity to participate in the Kakehashi study program. 17 other Kakehashi alumni and I, who are currently living in Japan, had various discussions revolving around "How to make Japan more appealing to foreigners who want to live and work in Japan?" After brainstorming, we presented our findings to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Yokohama. The organizers, participants and guests were friendly, and I learned a lot from them. Participating in another Kakehashi Project Program was great, and I would like to thank the Japan International Cooperation Center and the

	Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs for this wonderful opportunity.
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7. Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans at the Reporting Session (excerpt)

Locations: Tokyo, Kanagawa – Presentations made by all 4 groups

	
【What we Learned】 • There are many different customs in Japan. • A “diversity” scheme has already been achieved in Ameyoko Shopping Street. 【Proposals】 • If schools, companies, and local governments can provide cultural exchange and language classes using VR, workers from other countries will be able to integrate more smoothly into Japan, and the employers will become more aware of their situation. • We propose that companies and other organizations have a more free setting, incorporating more flexible working hours, more opportunities for small talk, and lighter in-house events (e.g., cosplay days), in addition to the currently adopted remote work system. This would also allow each individual to express their individuality and opinions in a more positive manner. 【Action Plan】 Each of us will share this program with the foreign nationals and their relatives in our own schools and companies via social media, etc., and let them know that facilities such as the Minami Citizens Activity and Multicultural Lounge are available. We will also find out after	【What we Learned】 • There were much more services available to foreign nationals residing in Japan than we had imagined. • Just by changing or thinking about how we communicate can make it easier for Japanese people and foreign nationals to live/work together. (Easy Japanese, body language, etc.) 【Proposals】 • It would be desirable to have a system where foreign nationals can obtain information on services available to them when they arrive in Japan all in one place. • It would be good to change how certain information is provided to foreigners at places they are sure to visit at least once, such as ward offices, from the current "ask and you shall receive" system to a "here you go" system. • If some kind of incentive can be given to events related to diversity or volunteer activities by foreign residents, we think a better symbiotic society can be achieved. 【Action Plan】 • We will promote easy Japanese to as many people as possible and explore communication methods that can be practically used at each of our individual workplaces and schools.

the program about services offered by international lounges and other facilities in the areas we reside. On an individual level, some participants plan to set up community chats for those who are considering studying abroad and holding English study groups for medical professionals.	• We will share information about institutions and organizations such as International Exchange Lounges and JICE to our respective networks. • We will encourage the introduction of "easy Japanese" at our own workplaces. • We will actively communicate with friends, colleagues, and international students to better understand each other.
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Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)