

Section 4

Efforts to Promote Understanding and Trust in Japan

1 Strategic Communications

(1) General Overview

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is strengthening its communication efforts so that understanding of Japan deepens in the international community and perceptions based on objective facts are formed. In particular, in recent years when international information warfare occurs on a constant basis, appropriately responding to information dissemination that damages Japan's credibility is of utmost importance in narrowing the margin for information manipulation. For this reason, strategic communication aimed at enhancing understanding of Japan's policies and initiatives and interest in Japan has become more important than ever. MOFA conducts strategic communications based on the fundamental policy of (a) making further efforts to disseminate Japan's policies, initiatives, and positions; (b) sharing Japan's rich and diverse attractions, and (c) expanding interest in, understanding of, and support for Japan. MOFA collects and analyzes information from a variety of angles, and then conducts strategic communications while also taking into account the National Security Strategy.

A Disseminating Japan's Policies, Initiatives, and Positions

In 2025, the international community became increasingly divided and confrontational, such as with Russia's protracted aggression against Ukraine and the continuing crisis in the Middle East. In response, MOFA, through various diplomatic opportunities and initiatives and while utilizing social media, has focused on disseminating information about Japan's basic ideas on, and initiatives for, peace, stability, and prosperity in the international community; maintaining and strengthening the international order based on the rule of law; and global issues. In addition, MOFA has also worked to enhance public awareness of issues concerning the

recognition of history and territory/sovereignty.

In particular, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, and other government officials hold press conferences, give interviews, contribute articles, or give speeches during overseas visits and international conferences, and Japan's diplomatic missions overseas also actively communicate with the governments, citizens, and media of their host countries. When foreign media outlets publish reports that include factual errors, the MOFA Headquarters and diplomatic missions overseas promptly lodge protests or post rebuttals, to ensure that media reports are made based on objective facts and understanding. In addition, MOFA creates publicity materials such as videos on Japan's foreign policy and then utilizes them through overseas television networks, websites, social media, and various other means. Furthermore, in order to make Japan's basic positions and viewpoints on policy issues understood, it is also important to enhance coordination with experts and think tanks. From these perspectives, MOFA invites influential experts and media personnel to Japan from abroad, and arranges opportunities for them to exchange views with various people, including Japanese government officials, to visit various places around Japan for study tours, and to conduct interviews. MOFA dispatches Japanese experts abroad, while extending its support for Japan-related seminars conducted by overseas research institutions.

By taking advantage of various opportunities and utilizing various tools, Japan is also engaged in efforts to strategically communicate information about matters on the recognition of history, including the issue of the so-called "comfort women" and various issues on Japan's territory and sovereignty. In addition, accurate information about the Rising Sun Flag is provided in a variety of forms, including making multi-language

explanatory materials and videos available on MOFA's website to gain understanding from the international community.⁽¹⁾ Moreover, in response to communications not based on facts, given the current situation in which information is instantaneously disseminated on a global scale, MOFA promptly communicates necessary rebuttals and accurate facts.

In order to increase the effectiveness of these communications, it is essential for MOFA to utilize social media such as X, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, as well as MOFA's website. In order to gain broader understanding, MOFA is making efforts to strengthen its communications, including by actively utilizing short videos and infographics⁽²⁾ on social media.

B Sharing Japan's Rich and Diverse Attractions

Fostering an international environment in which Japan and its people are favorably received — including through such communications by Japan — is also important. To (a) disseminate accurate information and (b) communicate the diverse attractions of Japanese culture are the two pillars of public diplomacy. With regard to sharing Japan's rich and diverse attractions, from the viewpoint of promoting understanding of Japan abroad, MOFA conducts a variety of cultural exchange and communication projects through its diplomatic missions overseas, and the Japan Foundation (JF) with the aim of further expanding the circle of Japan's Friends and fostering an international environment in which Japan and its people are favorably received.

Specifically, through cultural exchange projects conducted via its diplomatic missions and JF's overseas offices around the world, as well as activities such as the Japan International MANGA Award, MOFA actively promotes the appeal of a wide range of Japanese culture, from traditional culture to pop culture utilizing social media and other outreach methods. In doing so, MOFA has worked in cooperation with relevant stakeholders in Japan and abroad to promote the preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage throughout the world and the inscription of Japan's



cultural and natural heritage on the World Heritage List and the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Moreover, in order to promote a deeper understanding of Japan, through organizations such as JF, MOFA has been promoting people-to-people and intellectual exchanges, helping to spread the Japanese language, and supporting Japanese studies at universities and research institutes in major countries around the world, and has also been promoting youth exchanges between Japan and other countries and regions through programs such as "Japan's Friendship Ties Programs."

Through these public diplomacy efforts, MOFA will continue to make even further efforts with the aim of expanding interest in, understanding of, and support for Japan in the future.

(2) Responding to Information Warfare, Including Countering Disinformation

As geopolitical competition intensifies, international information warfare in the cognitive domain through information manipulation, including spread of disinformation, is a constant occurrence, as has been particularly conspicuous over the situation in Ukraine and Israel/Palestine. Foreign information manipulation, in

(1) Reference materials concerning the Rising Sun Flag are available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs here: https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/rp/page22e_000892.html
"Rising Sun Flag as Japanese Longstanding Culture" (Posted on MOFA's YouTube channel from October 8, 2021)

(2) Infographics refers to figures and illustrations used to represent data and information in an easy-to-understand manner.



which state and non-state actors deliberately spread disinformation and/or narratives to undermine confidence in Japan's policies or to impede democratic processes and international cooperation, is becoming increasingly important to address.

MOFA is aware of this and, based on the National Security Strategy, is steadily strengthening its information gathering, analysis and communication capabilities in response to information warfare through the cooperation of its information, policy and communication divisions, while also making efforts to conduct strategic communications in a timely and appropriate manner based on the results of information gathering and analysis.

In responding to foreign information manipulation, it is of utmost importance to strengthen the resilience of society as a whole, including media, think tanks and NGOs, and it is essential to tackle this through a public-private partnership. In April 2024, in order to raise broad understanding of MOFA's international efforts to counter information warfare, MOFA launched a page on its website entitled "The responses to information manipulation, including spread of disinformation," which is updated as needed.

In addition, based on the understanding that countries sharing the same concerns over foreign information manipulation should take concerted action, Japan is promoting cooperation with like-minded countries and others. Furthermore, Japan has been continuously holding discussions on information manipulation in bilateral formats and multilateral consultations, including the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), and has been engaged in discussions aimed at strengthening information sharing and response capabilities with countries and regions that share the same values.

(3) Information Provision Through the Internet

As information increases and spreads rapidly across the internet, MOFA has been actively engaged in providing information through its website and various social media platforms — including by opening a new official Instagram account in 2023, in addition to X, Facebook, and YouTube — in order to increase understanding and support of Japan's foreign policy among people both inside and outside of Japan. In addition to livestreaming the regular press conferences by the Foreign Minister

(in Japanese and English), MOFA also promptly and proactively communicated information about domestic and international diplomatic events such as the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9), the situation in Ukraine, the situation in Gaza, and other topics. Furthermore, MOFA also places importance on using recent trends to communicate diplomatic policy, such as by posting short videos on social media in which the Foreign Minister personally delivers messages about domestic and international diplomatic events involving the Foreign Minister, and by utilizing infographics incorporating figures and illustrations in addition to text.

Considering MOFA's English website to be an important tool for public diplomacy, MOFA has been enhancing its efforts to provide information in English on Japan's foreign policy concerning such subjects as territory and sovereignty, recognition of history, and security, as well as Japan's position on international affairs and Japan's diverse appeals. MOFA has also been working to provide information in local languages through the social media and the websites of Japan's diplomatic missions overseas (embassies, consulates general, and permanent missions).

(4) Media Coverage of Japan in Other Countries and Regions, and Dissemination to Foreign Media

MOFA promptly and proactively provides information and assistance to foreign media in order to gain the understanding and support of the international community on Japan's policies, initiatives and positions. Communication through foreign media includes efforts to conduct interviews with the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister, regular press conferences by the Foreign Minister (livestreaming is also available online), briefings (overview explanations), press releases, press tours and other means. MOFA makes efforts to achieve strategic and effective communications by providing information in a timely manner based on the diplomatic schedule. Furthermore, in cases where there are significant factual errors or reports that are incompatible with Japan's position, MOFA promptly lodges protests or posts rebuttals to the media in an effort to ensure that media reports are made based on objective facts and understanding.

In 2025, Japan's diplomacy attracted international attention through events including the 2025 World Exposition (Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan), the holding of TICAD 9 in Yokohama, the formation of the Takaichi Cabinet and its subsequent overseas visits, the Japan-United States (U.S.) Summit Meeting on the occasion of U.S. President Donald J. Trump's visit to Japan, and the Summit of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue held in Tokyo. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister made frequent overseas visits and actively communicated with foreign media through contributions and interviews. For example, Prime Minister Takaichi contributed articles to major newspapers in each destination country in order to communicate Japan's position at each summit and the significance of the bilateral relationship between Japan and the countries visited, including at the ASEAN-related Summit Meeting in Malaysia (October), which was her first overseas visit after taking office as Prime Minister, and at the G20 Johannesburg Summit (South Africa).

In 2025, the Prime Minister contributed articles and gave interviews 71 times, and the Foreign Minister contributed articles and gave interviews a total of 20 times. Additionally, MOFA provided information to foreign media through the Press Secretary and other means, and held press briefings to local media on the occasions of overseas visits by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. Under the project to invite foreign media, in 2025, 12 invitation programs were provided, and 32 journalists from 21 countries participated in the project.

(5) JAPAN HOUSE

MOFA has established JAPAN HOUSE overseas communication hubs in three cities, namely Sao Paulo (Brazil), London (United Kingdom (UK)) and Los Angeles (the United States (U.S.)). The purpose is to attract a wide range of people, including those who

know very little about Japan and to enlarge the base of people who are interested and well-versed in Japan by communicating Japan's rich and varied attractiveness as well as its various policies, initiatives, and views.

JAPAN HOUSE promotes effective communication by (a) communicating through "All-Japan" efforts by the central and local governments, private sectors, and other actors, (b) promoting outreach that reflects the needs of local communities, and (c) providing a "one-stop-service" where various information related to Japan can be obtained from one location.

With the slogan "Mind-blowing Encounters with Japan across the Globe," each JAPAN HOUSE conducts locally designed exhibitions which are independently organized by each hub, as well as touring exhibitions that are selected by experts from public proposals in Japan and exhibited at all three hubs. In this way, JAPAN HOUSE works to provide high-quality exhibitions by leveraging the know-how of experts both in those hub cities and in Japan. In addition to exhibitions, Japan's diverse attractions, including traditional culture and arts, advanced technology, nature, architecture, food culture, pop culture such as films and manga, and design, as well as its various policies, initiatives and views, are also widely disseminated through other formats such as lectures, seminars, workshops, webinars, library spaces, websites and social media, merchandise, and food and beverages. JAPAN HOUSE is also currently working actively to win over new audiences by conducting some exhibitions in other cities or in neighboring countries, and by using hybrid methods combining in-person and online formats, and through exhibitions and events related to Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan. By the end of December 2025, the total number of visitors to the three hubs had exceeded 8.42 million, indicating that the hubs are becoming firmly established as major cultural facilities in each city.

2 Cultural, Sports, and Tourism Diplomacy

(1) Overview

A very large number of foreign nationals develop an interest in Japan and visit Japan through Japanese culture. MOFA and JF carry out various projects ranging

from communicating the appeal of Japanese culture to promoting sports and inbound tourism. For example, "Cultural Projects of Diplomatic Missions Overseas" introduce the broad spectrum of Japan's attractions,

from traditional culture such as tea ceremony, flower arrangement, and martial arts, to food culture and pop culture such as anime, manga, and fashion.

In order to carry on the legacy of Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games held in 2021, MOFA engaged in initiatives as part of the “Sport for Tomorrow (SFT),” which is Japan’s program for international exchanges and cooperation through sports, such as various sports exchanges and sports promotion support projects overseas, dispatching and inviting sports instructors through the JICA Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) program, and the provision of sporting equipment and improvement of sporting facilities through Cultural Grant Assistance. MOFA is also providing information about these initiatives in Japan and abroad on MOFA’s “MofaJapan × SPORTS” official X (formerly Twitter) account.

MOFA also conducts a range of activities through Japan’s diplomatic missions overseas to promote a deeper understanding of Japan amongst the diverse human resources who will lead the next generation. These include providing information on studying in Japan; building alumni networks comprising foreign nationals who have studied in Japan; cooperating with the JET Programme, which invites young foreign nationals to work for local governments in Japan; holding exchange and invitation programs for youth and adults from Asia, the U.S. and other regions; and providing support for Japanese studies at universities and research institutions.

Promoting Japanese language overseas fosters individuals who engage in exchange with Japan, deepens understanding of Japan, and creates foundations for friendship between Japan and other countries, while also contributing to the realization of a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals in Japan. From these kinds of perspectives, within Japan the Act on Promotion of Japanese Language Education was promulgated and entered into force in June 2019, and the Basic Policy for the Comprehensive and Effective Implementation of Measures to Promote Japanese Language Education (Cabinet Decision) was formulated in June 2020 (revised on September 5, 2025). Based on these policies, through JF, MOFA is working to improve the overseas environment for Japanese language education, including by dispatching Japanese

language specialists overseas, conducting training programs for overseas Japanese language teachers, and developing Japanese language education materials. MOFA has also been working to meet social need by providing Japanese language education to foreigners interested in coming to Japan for work.

In cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and other partners, Japan has been actively engaged in supporting protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage as well as natural heritage across the world. Moreover, Japan is actively taking part in the promotion of international frameworks for safeguarding heritage through conventions such as the World Heritage Convention and the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

By putting creative efforts into promoting such cultural and sports diplomacy, such as through greater use of digital tools, and by sharing information on Japan’s charms to the world, MOFA also contributes to bringing more foreign visitors to Japan in the future.

(2) Cultural Programs

For Japan’s foreign policy to be smoothly implemented in the international community, it is important to promote a better understanding of Japan among the individuals who form the foundation of public opinion and policy making, and to make Japan’s image even more positive. Based on this perception, MOFA engages in communicating information about the diverse attractions of Japan through diplomatic missions overseas and JF.

Diplomatic missions overseas carry out a range of cultural projects as part of efforts to promote a deeper understanding of Japan and to make Japan’s image even more positive in the areas under their jurisdiction. For example, they actively introduce Japanese lifestyles and culture such as workshops on tea ceremony, flower arrangement and origami, Japanese film screenings, Japanese music performances, martial arts tournaments and demonstrations, exhibitions on traditional crafts and Japanese photography, popular culture such as anime and manga, as well as Japan’s food culture. At the same time, they also plan and implement Japanese speech contests and essay contests.

Additionally, MOFA takes advantage of years marking diplomatic milestones to revitalize cultural and

people-to-people exchange projects and to further strengthen relations by intensively holding large-scale, comprehensive anniversary events with government-affiliated organizations and private companies. In 2025, large-scale cultural events were held to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and Republic of Korea (ROK), the 130th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between Japan and Brazil, the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Saudi Arabia, the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Malta, and the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Cabo Verde diplomatic relations.

JF also leverages its overseas offices and, in collaboration with Japan's diplomatic missions overseas, develops and implements cultural and artistic exchange programs with partner countries.

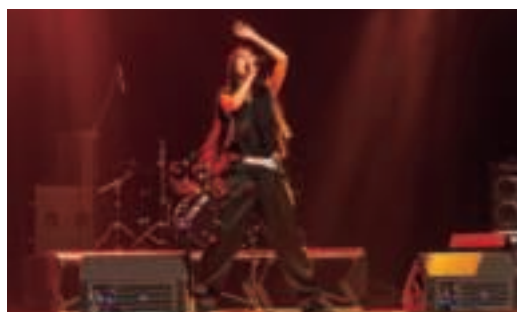
In 2025, as part of a project to support the holding of Japan festivals to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the ROK, JF dispatched the breaking team “KOSÉ 8ROCKS” to the “Japan-Korea Exchange Festival 2025 in Seoul,” held in Seoul, to give a stage performance. To mark the 130th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Brazil, JF dispatched Japanese performance artist Saeborg to São Paulo and hosted his performance “Super Farm,” thereby promoting cultural and artistic exchange between Japan and Brazil. Furthermore, taking the opportunity of TICAD 9 held in August, JF dispatched MYTH &ROID, sajou no hana, and MAESHIMA Mayu — popular artists known for performing theme songs from hit anime — to Cairo and Alexandria in Egypt, where they held anime song live concerts and exchange events with local Japanese language learners. Additionally, the “Japanese Film Festival (JFF) Africa Tour” was implemented, with large-scale Japanese film festivals held in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Rwanda out of the 17 target countries. In connection with this, Japanese films with multilingual subtitles were distributed to all 54 countries in Africa through “JFF Theater,” the free streaming platform for Japanese visual content operated by JF. In addition, at Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan, through grants to the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exposition,



60th Anniversary of the Normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and Republic of Korea (October 22, Seoul, ROK)



Japan-Brazil Friendship Exchange Year (June 28, Manaus, Brazil)



Anime Song Concert in Egypt to Commemorate TICAD 9 — Performance by MAESHIMA Mayu (October 23 to 25, Cairo and Alexandria, Egypt)



Japanese-Style Jazz Dance Team “Hanabi” Viet Nam Performance Program (October 4, Hai Phong, Viet Nam)

support was provided to developing countries for travel and accommodation expenses for curators, performers,



Japan Festival Support Program: "Japan-Korea Exchange Festival 2025 in Seoul" (October 12, Seoul, ROK; Photo: kang jaegu)



18th Japan International MANGA Award Ceremony (March 12, Tokyo)

and others involved in the exhibitions of national pavilions and National Day events in Japan.

Furthermore, JF is intensively implementing the people-to-people exchange program "Partnership to Co-create a Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0," which, over the 10-year period from 2024 to 2033, focuses on two pillar projects of "Two-way Intellectual and Cultural Exchange" and the "NIHONGO Partners Program" between Japan and ASEAN countries and others. As part of this effort, in 2025, JF dispatched KINJO Shinji, Artistic Director of the National Theatre Okinawa, to Jakarta (Indonesia) and multiple other cities, where Ryukyuan dance performances were held along with workshops and demonstrations for students at arts universities and for Japanese language learners. Japan also dispatched the Japanese-style jazz dance team "Hanabi" to Hai Phong (Viet Nam), where dance performances were held, and workshops were conducted for students at schools where "NIHONGO Partners" who support Japanese language classes are active, thereby promoting two-way arts exchange between Japan and Southeast

Asia. In addition, in 2025, the NIHONGO Partners Program (long-term dispatch) began long-term dispatch to India in addition to seven ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand, the Philippines, Viet Nam, Malaysia, and Laos) and Taiwan, and for the first time, short-term dispatch to Mongolia was also implemented.⁽³⁾

The Japan International MANGA Award was launched by MOFA in 2007 to honor overseas manga artists who have created outstanding manga works, with the aims of spreading manga culture overseas and promoting international cultural exchange through manga. In the 19th Japan International MANGA Award, held in 2025, a record high of 738 entries were received from 110 countries and regions. The Gold Award was presented to a work from Brazil, while Silver Awards were presented to works from Saudi Arabia, Viet Nam, and Taiwan. Notably, this year also marked first-ever entries from six countries and regions: Afghanistan, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Togo, Nepal, Puerto Rico, and Libya.

(3) People-to-People Exchange and Exchange in the Area of Education and Sports

To build personal relationships and promote a better understanding of Japan, MOFA carries out a number of programs that invite foreign nationals who have a significant influence on shaping public opinion and the policymaking process and who are expected to play a leading role in various fields. In the area of education and sports, MOFA conducts various activities to promote a wide range of people-to-people exchanges. These projects not only promote mutual understanding and friendship, but also increase the number of "supporters" for Japan in the international community, which in turn considerably benefits Japan's national diplomatic interests.

A Student Exchange Programs

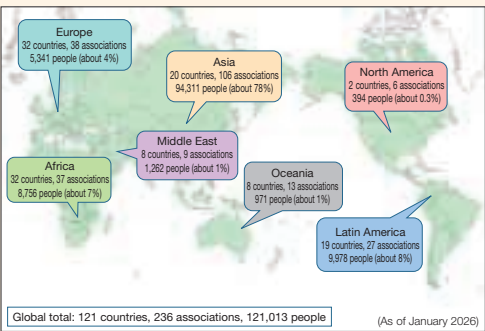
MOFA actively introduces the attractiveness and opportunities of studying in Japan to foreign nationals through Japanese diplomatic missions overseas, and

(3) Under the "NIHONGO Partners Program," long-term dispatch has been conducted to India, Indonesia, Cambodia, Singapore, Thailand, China, the Philippines, Brunei, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Myanmar, Laos, and Taiwan from 2014 to 2025. Mongolia and Timor-Leste have received short-term dispatch only.

implements application and screening procedures to grant the Japanese Government (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) Scholarship to promising students abroad. It also makes efforts to network with former international students who have returned to their home countries through Japan Alumni Associations and to expand interest in, understanding of, and support for Japan. In March, the fifth Japan Alumni Conference was held in a hybrid format following the same format as the previous year. At the Conference, participants gave reports on each alumni association's domestic activities and exchanged opinions about conferences held in each region, and strengthened networks among alumni from different countries.

The Quad Fellowship was announced at the Second Japan-Australia-India-U.S. (Quad) Summit Meeting in September 2021 as an educational and people-to-people exchange cooperation program, and awards scholarships for studying in the U.S. to outstanding individuals in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) from the four countries. Under this framework, in August 2025, the third cohort of 25 recipients (5 from each country of Japan, Australia, India, and the U.S. and 5 from the ASEAN region) began their studies in the U.S. In addition, 12 MEXT scholarship foreign students studying in Japan were recognized as Japan Fellows to participate in the Fellowship program.

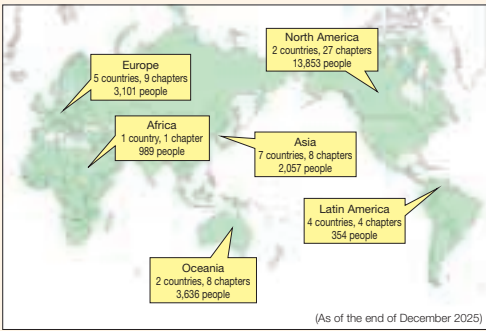
■ Japan Alumni Associations and members by region



■ JET Programme (The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme)

The JET Programme was launched in 1987 to improve foreign language education in Japan and promote

■ JET Alumni Association Chapters and members



Farewell Reception for JET Programme Participants from India (July 25, New Delhi, India)

international exchange with Japanese citizens in local areas. This program is administered by local authorities and other organizations in cooperation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), MOFA, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR). Through the program, young foreign nationals are invited to Japan and appointed to posts in local governments and schools by local governments and other entities. MOFA is responsible for the application and screening process, pre-departure orientation at diplomatic missions overseas, and support for the activities of the JET Alumni Association (JETAA), which operates in 21 countries and has about 24,000 members. In FY 2025, 5,933 participants from 54 countries, including 1,501 new participants, were dispatched to all parts of Japan, and more than 81,000 people have participated in the JET Programme to date as of July 1, 2025. JETAA conducts activities to introduce Japan in many countries. Many of those

who went through the JET Programme are important human and diplomatic assets for Japan, as they go on to engage as people with great affinity toward or knowledge of Japan, in activities that contribute to expanding interest in, understanding of, and support for Japan while also playing an active role in a variety of fields in both the public and private sectors in their own countries.

C Sports Exchange

Sports enable communication beyond language and can be an effective tool for promoting friendly relations and a better understanding of Japan. Under the “Projects for Sports Diplomacy Enhancement” scheme, MOFA is engaged in sports exchange and cooperation initiatives including providing support for the transport of equipment to sports organizations in various countries, thereby contributing to the development of bilateral relations. This project contributes to enhancing mutual understanding internationally by promoting diplomacy through sports and by expanding interest in, understanding of, and support for Japan. At the same time, it also improves the standing of Japan in the world of international sports.



Projects for Sports Diplomacy Enhancement: Handover Ceremony of Judo Uniforms to Uzbekistan (March 28, Tashkent, Uzbekistan)

D Japan's Friendship Ties Programs

With a view to expanding the basis for Japan's diplomacy, which develops bilateral and inter-regional relationships between Japan and countries and regions in the Asia-Pacific, North America, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, MOFA implements the Japan's Friendship Ties Programs to promote multifaceted understanding of Japan to youths from various countries and regions, through invitations, dispatches,



JENESYS ASEAN-Japan Sports (Football) x SDGs Exchange — Bo Soccer Experience (October 31, Osaka; Photo: Japan International Cooperation Center)

and online exchanges, striving to seek and cultivate future generations with great affinity toward or knowledge of Japan, and working to strengthen the spread of information about Japan from overseas. In 2025, about 1,700 youths participated in these programs, attending lectures by Japanese experts in politics, economics, society, culture, history, and diplomatic policies, and also went on observation tours in each field and had exchanges of opinions and experienced Japanese culture. These programs kindled interest in Japan amongst young people from various countries and regions, broadened the base of support for Japan, and contributed to promoting understanding of Japan and making Japan's image even more positive in the international community via participants sharing what they learned through the program and their experiences in Japan through reports to their organizations and social media. In addition, about 90 follow-up programs, such as alumni reunions and online Japan revisits, have been held for alumni of these programs, thereby continuing to foster strong networks and to promote an even deeper understanding of Japan's relations with other countries and regions in their respective area of interest.

(4) Exchange in the Intellectual Field

A Japanese Studies

Through JF, MOFA comprehensively supports a range of overseas research activities related to the politics, economy, society, and culture of Japan. In 2025, through JF's Japanese Studies Fellowship Program, 87 researchers were provided with the opportunity to visit Japan for research. As part of the “Partnership to Co-create a



Participants in the Summer Program for Aspiring Southeast Asia Scholars in Japanese Studies (June 29 to July 19, Singapore and Tokyo)

Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0,” JF, in cooperation with the Japan Studies Association of Southeast Asia (JSA-ASEAN), the National University of Singapore, and the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia at the University of Tokyo, newly implemented the “Summer Program for Aspiring Southeast Asia Scholars in Japanese Studies” in July 2025, through which lectures, workshops, and other activities were provided for graduate students specializing in Japanese Studies from six Southeast Asian countries (Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Viet Nam, and Malaysia), thereby contributing to the development of international careers for participants while strengthening multilayered personal networks and fostering the next generation of Japanese studies scholars.

JF also dispensed grants for expanding Japanese studies faculty members, for organizing seminars and symposiums, dispatch of visiting professors, and for expanding the collection of books on Japan to a total of 51 institutions of Japanese studies in 32 countries and regions in 2025. In addition, it provided support to academic societies with the goal of promoting network building among Japanese studies researchers and research institutions from various countries and regions.

B International Dialogue

Through JF, MOFA implements Global Partnerships Programs for international dialogues that aim to create and share new knowledge and wisdom, to resolve common issues, and to deepen mutual understanding among future generations. Specifically, it hosted seminars and symposiums based on the themes of common international issues, and conducted exchanges by dispatching or inviting prominent cultural figures and other guests. It planned, implemented, and supported exchange projects that contribute to promoting dialogue



ASEAN-Japan Exchange Program for Secondary School Educators
— Study Tour in Japan: Japanese Culture Experience at Morimoto Noh Stage (June 26, Fukuoka)

at various levels, human resource development, and the establishment of interpersonal networks. These include the implementation of the Japan Outreach Initiative (JOI) program, which dispatches Japanese coordinators to the U.S. with a view to deepening interest in and understanding of Japan at the grassroots level in the U.S.

In 2025, following on from the previous year, the Japan Foundation Indo-Pacific Partnership Program (JFIPP) was implemented, in which experts and practitioners from the region tackle common issues in order to develop human resources who can contribute to the realization of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP),” with a total of 78 people participating. In March, Oren Cass, a young commentator attracting attention as a leading voice for new conservative thinking under the new Trump administration in the U.S., was invited to Japan, where dialogues with Japanese experts and public symposiums were held. JF also co-hosted, together with the Japanese-German Center Berlin, a symposium in hybrid format on the theme of sustainability in tourism, where researchers and tourism practitioners from both Japan and Germany exchanged discussions and knowledge. Furthermore, as part of the “Partnership to Co-create a Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0,” JF invited a total of 98 teachers and others from secondary education institutions in ASEAN countries to Japan, and implemented programs such as school visits, opinion exchanges with Japanese teachers, experiences in Japanese culture, and on-site tours of Japan’s efforts to address global issues. It is hoped that these programs will deepen the participants’ understanding of and affinity for Japan, and that they will be able to apply the results of their experiences to their own educational settings after returning home.

C Japan-United States Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange (CULCON)

In CULCON, where public and private sector experts from Japan and the U.S. discuss cultural and educational exchange and intellectual dialogue, a symposium on the theme of building Japan-U.S. partnerships was held in Washington, D.C., U.S. in February. In addition, of the two Japan-U.S. joint subcommittees, the “Subnational Diplomacy/Local & Regional Exchange” subcommittee held its fifth meeting in Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture in June and its sixth meeting in hybrid format in October. Furthermore, the “Information Access and Sharing in the Digital Age” subcommittee also held its fifth meeting in hybrid format in October. Both subcommittees are scheduled to submit their final reports, including policy recommendations, to the 31st Plenary Session of the Japan-U.S. CULCON to be held in February 2026.

D Cooperation with the United Nations University (UNU)

The UNU is the only UN organization headquartered in Japan, and, as a think tank for all UN agencies, the UNU contributes to the international community not only in research on global issues including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) but also in human resource development by offering degree programs, and in 2025 UNU celebrated its 50th anniversary. Japan provides a variety of cooperation and support to UNU. In August, two thematic events were held at TICAD 9, and multiple TICAD-related events were also implemented. In

September, the “Ceremony for the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations University” was held, attended by Foreign Minister Iwaya, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology ABE Toshiko, Minister of the Environment ASAO Keiichiro, and Governor of Tokyo KOIKE Yuriko. UNU also contributes to promoting discussions on the SDGs through dialogue series and other events organized by UNU.

(5) Promotion of the Japanese Language

As the globalization of Japan's economy prompts more Japanese companies to do business overseas and Japanese pop culture finds global popularity, interest in the Japanese language is growing around the world, especially overseas among young people. Further promoting the spread of the Japanese language overseas leads to the promotion of understanding of Japan abroad and the creation of an international environment favorable to the Japanese people and companies. Furthermore, improving the Japanese language proficiency of foreign nationals who wish to work in Japan is also important for those foreign nationals to coexist in Japanese society. A survey conducted by JF in FY 2024 confirmed that approximately 4 million people in 143 countries and regions are learning Japanese. The number of applicants for the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) offered by JF (including those taking the test in Japan) temporarily decreased after 2020 due to the spread of COVID-19, but has since recovered and has been rapidly increasing, with the number of applicants in 2025 reaching a record high of approximately 1.94 million.

Through JF, MOFA is working to improve the environment for and to address the diverse needs related to Japanese language education overseas. For example, JF dispatches Japanese language specialists abroad; carries out training programs for Japanese language teachers, foreign-service officers and public officials; trains cultural and academic personnel; supports Japanese language education for children; conducts Japanese language pre-training for nurse and care worker candidates under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with Indonesia and the Philippines; encourages educational institutions in each country and region to introduce Japanese language education and supports Japanese language educational activities; develops teaching materials; runs e-learning programs; and promotes the “JF



Congratulatory Message from Foreign Minister Iwaya at the Ceremony for the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations University (September 18, Tokyo, United Nations University)

Standard for Japanese-Language Education,” which corresponds with international standards for foreign language education. As a major pillar of the “Partnership to Co-create a Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0” initiative, JF dispatches NIHONGO Partners to support Japanese-language instruction at secondary schools and similar institutions across ASEAN countries and beyond. In 2025, a total of 538 NIHONGO Partners were dispatched to 13 countries and regions. Additionally, 69 teachers and 131 students from host institutions were invited to Japan for training opportunities. To address labor force shortages brought about by the declining birthrate and aging population in Japan, Japan has begun to accept foreign nationals under the April 2019 residence status as “Specified Skilled Workers.” Accordingly, through JF, MOFA has been taking new measures since then in accordance with the “Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals” (decided upon at the December 25, 2018, Ministerial Conference on Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals), that include conducting the Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese (JFT-Basic), which assesses the Japanese language ability of foreign nationals who come to Japan (by the end of 2025, a total of about 530,000 people have taken the test in 13 countries overseas and within Japan), as well as developing and disseminating learning materials and curriculum with the goal of fostering people’s Japanese language ability effectively, and nurturing local Japanese language teachers who teach Japanese to those who wish to work in Japan. Additionally, in response to the occurrence of irregularities in Japanese language tests implemented by JF, thorough measures have been implemented to prevent recurrence.

(6) Cooperation through United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

UNESCO is the first international organization that Japan became a Member State of after the war, in 1951. Japan is actively involved in a variety of UNESCO projects in the fields of education, science, and culture. Since 1952, Japan has continued to serve as a Member State of the Executive Board of UNESCO.

Japan cooperates with UNESCO and provides support to developing countries in the fields of education,

science, and culture. In the field of culture, Japan places particular emphasis on the preservation and promotion of the world’s tangible and intangible cultural heritage and human resource development. Furthermore, Japan participates proactively in international frameworks for the protection of cultural heritage. Specific efforts include the support projects for the conservation and restoration of Angkor monuments in Cambodia, which have continued since 1994, and of the Bamiyan site in Afghanistan, which have continued since 2003. In these projects, Japanese experts play a central role, and human resource development is being promoted to enable local stakeholders to independently take charge of protecting such sites in the future. In addition, support is also provided for the development of conservation and management plans for heritage sites, as well as for their preservation and restoration. Japan also contributed 100,000 U.S. dollars each to UNESCO’s emergency education support for Gaza and Lebanon. Japan also continues to provide support to Ukraine’s cultural and education sector, which is facing difficulties, through UNESCO. In recent years, Japan has also been providing support for capacity building to African countries and small island developing states to help them strike a balance between protecting cultural heritage and sustainable development. As for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, support is provided to projects to pass on traditional performing arts such as music, dance, and traditional arts and crafts to the next generation in developing countries, as well as projects involving development of domestic institutions and capacity building for relevant parties to enhance countries’ ability to protect intangible cultural heritage by themselves.

UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay has been promoting “Strategic Transformation” toward strengthening UNESCO, which includes reforms for the de-politicization of UNESCO and organizational reforms, and Japan has been consistently supporting the Director-General. In May, Foreign Minister Iwaya, during his visit to Paris, held talks with Director-General Azoulay, and both sides agreed to continue to work cooperatively on various challenges within UNESCO going forward. In September, Director-General Azoulay visited Japan, paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister Ishiba, and held meetings with Foreign

Minister Iwaya and Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology Abe, where views were exchanged on continued cooperation between Japan and UNESCO. In November, Director-General Azoulay completed her eight-year tenure and stepped down, and new Director-General Khaled El-Enany took office. Japan will continue to actively contribute to UNESCO's activities promoted under the leadership of the new Director-General.

A World Heritage Convention

The World Heritage Convention aims to protect cultural heritage and natural heritage internationally as heritage belonging to all mankind. Japan concluded the Convention in 1992 (as of December 2025, the number of States Parties to the Convention is 196). The sites listed on the "World Heritage List" are known as "World Heritage Sites." They are classified into "Cultural Heritage Sites" (monuments and remains), "Natural Heritage Sites" (natural areas) and "Mixed Heritage Sites" (sites with both cultural and natural elements). As of December 2025, a total of 1,248 World Heritage Sites are included on the World Heritage List, including 26 heritage sites (21 cultural heritage sites and five natural heritage sites) in Japan. The 47th session of the World Heritage Committee was held in July 2025 in Paris.

B Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage aims to develop an international system for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage such as traditional performing arts and traditional craftsmanship techniques (as of December 2025, the number of States Parties to the Convention is 185). Japan, with abundant experience in safeguarding domestic intangible cultural properties, served as the chair of the intergovernmental working group meetings held in 2021 and 2022 to discuss improvements to the operational mechanism of this Convention, leading discussions by incorporating requests from developing countries. In December 2025, inscription of the following three Japanese cultural elements, on an extended basis as a national extension, on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, was decided. "Washi, craftsmanship of traditional Japanese

hand-made paper," "Yama, Hoko, Yatai, float festivals in Japan," and "Traditional skills, techniques and knowledge for the conservation and transmission of wooden architecture in Japan" (Addition of relevant cultural properties to elements already inscribed on the Representative List). In addition, in March of the same year, Japan resubmitted to the UNESCO Secretariat its proposal for "Shodo: Calligraphy in Japan" as a new nomination (as of December 2025, the total number of items inscribed from Japan stands at 23).

C UNESCO Memory of the World Programme

The UNESCO Memory of the World Programme was established in 1992 to promote the safeguarding of and access to, and raise awareness of valuable archival heritage. Of these, according to the UNESCO website, as of December 2025, 570 items have been inscribed under the international register.

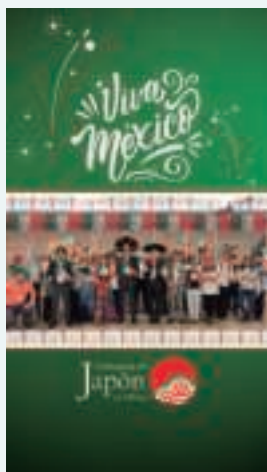
The fact that the governments of Member States could not be involved in the assessment process of the nominations under the previous mechanism, even in the cases where there are clear discrepancies of views between the concerned Member States, is not consistent with the founding principle of UNESCO: promoting friendly ties and mutual understanding among Member States. After 2017, submission of new nominations was suspended, and Japan led the comprehensive review process of the programme. As a result, a new mechanism was approved by the UNESCO Executive Board in April 2021, under which nominations are submitted through the governments of Member States. Additionally, a contestation system was newly established, which keeps nominations over which Member States have conflicting views on hold until dialogues between the concerned countries have been concluded. With the completion of the review process, the call for new nominations resumed in July of the same year, and from Japan, the "The Monk Enchin Archives: A History of Japan-China Cultural Exchange" (nominators: Onjo-ji Temple and Tokyo National Museum) was newly inscribed in May 2023; in addition, in April 2025, the new inscription of "Three Editions of Buddhist Sacred Canons stored at Zojoji, Japan" (nominators: The Jodo-Shu Religious Corporation and the Zojoji Religious Corporation) was decided.

Column

At the Frontline of Diplomacy: Locally Attuned Communications by Diplomatic Missions Overseas

In recent years, communication via social media has become highly influential, and its importance as a tool for disseminating information with a view to enhancing understanding and support — both domestically and internationally — for Japan's foreign policy has grown ever greater. Against this backdrop, diplomatic missions overseas and their heads (Ambassadors and Consuls-General), who are active on the frontlines of diplomacy around the world, have established accounts on social media platforms such as X, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Through these accounts, they tailor their communications to the characteristics of each country and region.

As a prerequisite for diplomatic missions overseas and their heads to communicate effectively about their day-to-day foreign policy activities, it is also important to cultivate an environment in which local communities develop a sense of affinity toward Japan and the Japanese people and are well-disposed toward Japan. This column introduces, through examples of social media engagement, how diplomatic missions overseas — in addition to communicating Japan's foreign policy activities on a daily basis on the frontlines of diplomacy — devise creative approaches to foster a sense of closeness to Japan among local communities.



Video posted on September 15 by the Embassy of Japan in Mexico celebrating "Mexican Independence Day"

■ Communications Attuned to the People and Culture of Mexico

The Embassy of Japan in Mexico is actively leveraging social media to engage in communications that resonate with the people and culture of Mexico, with the aim of improving favorable sentiment toward Japan in Mexican society. As a result of crafting posts and visual compositions that strike an emotional chord with viewers — including a video celebrating "Mexican Independence Day" that generated a significant response not only in Mexico but also among Mexican communities living in the United States — the Embassy has attracted a large and growing number of followers.

By featuring many Embassy staff together in the content, the messaging achieves a sense of unity, and the creative efforts to express respect and affinity for Mexico have succeeded in attracting the attention of a wide audience. Furthermore, communicating in Spanish has helped the content spread not only within Mexico, but also across borders. Through this kind of messaging — sustained engagement that resonates with local people and their culture — the Embassy continues to work toward enhancing understanding of Japan.

Official Facebook of the Embassy of Japan in Mexico:
<https://www.facebook.com/JapanEmb.Mexico/>



■ The Ambassador Experiencing Local Customs Firsthand to Expand Affinity toward Japan

The Embassy of Japan in Romania uses social media to share videos introducing the Ambassador's approachable character, with the aim of making the Embassy's activities — unfamiliar to many in everyday life — known to a broader segment of Romanian society. Beginning with a video of the Ambassador enjoying local food, the content has featured the Ambassador experiencing regional culture and home cooking unique to Romania, and attempting to deliver seasonal greetings while dressed in traditional folk costume. Through such efforts, the Embassy has been mindful of creating content that

surprises and delights even those unfamiliar with Japanese diplomats, and that inspires them to become fans of Japan.

This approach has made the Ambassador's activities a topic of conversation even at meetings with senior Romanian government officials and business and cultural figures. Moreover, young people at events where the Embassy exhibits have been known to approach the Ambassador for commemorative photographs, asking "Is Mr. Ambassador here?" Through its social media communications, public awareness of the Ambassador has increased dramatically, enabling the Embassy to carry out its activities more effectively.

Official Instagram of the Embassy of Japan in Romania:
https://www.instagram.com/embassy_jpro/



Video introducing Ambassador of Japan to Romania Katae, who took on the challenge of splitting firewood dressed in traditional folk costume from the Maramureş region



Ambassador of Japan to Iran Tsukada and Iranian musician Sharifian performing together at a concert

■ Joint Instagram Posts with Notable Figures in Iran

The Embassy of Japan in Iran leverages its personal networks to collaborate with local influencers — including prominent actors, artists, and culinary experts — primarily through Instagram, which is widely used in Iran, thereby reaching Iranians who have had no prior connection with Japan and cultivating among them a sense of affinity toward Japan.

In one particularly notable instance, the Ambassador performed on the Iranian end-blown reed flute (*ney*) at a concert by a prominent Iranian musician, and a video of their joint performance was simultaneously posted on both the musician's and Embassy's account, generating a significant response. The post was covered by major local media outlets and became a topic of conversation among senior Iranian government officials. This has led to further offers of joint posts from a growing number of Iranians, including influencers.

The Embassy of Japan in Iran's Instagram account has a particularly high number of followers among the other countries' Embassies in Iran, and the Embassy's activities communicated through that account attract the attention of a diverse range of local people.

Official Instagram of the Embassy of Japan in Iran:
<https://www.instagram.com/japaniniran/>



For social media accounts maintained by each Embassy and Ambassador, please refer to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:
https://www.mofa.go.jp/about/list_en.html



Column

Number One in the World per Capita! The Achievements of the JET Programme in New Zealand

Embassy of Japan in New Zealand

Are you familiar with the JET Programme?¹ Its full official name is “The Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme,” and it primarily places participants in local governments, boards of education, and public schools across Japan, where they support foreign language instruction and international exchange activities. Through these efforts, the JET Programme promotes grassroots internationalization and fosters mutual understanding between Japan and other countries.”²

Many people will recall being taught English by a foreign teacher at school — and among those teachers, a great many were JET Programme participants. Since the Programme was established in 1987, more than 80,000 participants from 82 countries around the world have taken part, carrying out foreign language education and international exchange activities across Japan. In New Zealand, it is common to encounter people who say, “I’m a former JET.” New Zealand is one of the four countries that first took part in the JET Programme — the other three being the United States, the United Kingdom (UK), and Australia — and more than 3,600 New Zealanders have participated to date. With a population of 5.32 million,³ this means that approximately one in every 1,500 New Zealanders has been a JET Programme participant — a ratio that ranks first in the world. New Zealand is truly a “JET powerhouse” with an exceptionally deep connection to the Programme. In 2025, 171 participants are teaching English or engaging in international exchange and sports exchange activities in local government international affairs sections and other organizations throughout Japan.



Mr. James Hurring, a former JET Programme participant who is now an origami artist and secondary school teacher

In New Zealand, there are many participants who, through the JET Programme, came into contact with Japanese society and returned home with a deep affection for Japan. After completing the Programme, they go on to thrive in diverse fields, drawing on their JET experience. Some teach Japanese at secondary school, others work as origami artists, and still others engage in local government or agriculture. There are even cases where two JET participants have married each other, and their children have gone on to join the Programme themselves. The degree to which each person loves Japan varies, and not all of them necessarily pursue careers directly connected to Japan. However, the fond memories JET participants carry of their time in Japan, which they share with those around them from time to time, and which spread from person to person, spark interest in Japan among people who have never visited. This creates a virtuous cycle in which a new generation develops an interest in Japan and goes on to participate in the JET Programme.

New Zealand has an extremely high level of affinity for Japan. In opinion surveys on perceptions of foreign countries, Japan ranks fourth — after Australia, the UK, and Canada, countries with historically close ties as English-speaking nations — with 80% of New Zealanders considering Japan a friend.⁴ Furthermore, Japanese is included among the five important foreign languages designated for educational institutions by the government, and the ties between Japan and New Zealand encompass countless school-to-school exchange programs and 44 sister city relationships. Japan occupies a close and familiar place in the lives of New Zealanders, and it is no exaggeration to say that JET Programme participants are among those who have helped sustain that connection.



Ms. Trées Neal, a JET Programme Coordinator for International Relations (CIR), who visited Hutt City together with the Mayor of Minoh City to serve as interpreter at the ceremony commemorating the 30th anniversary of the international cooperating city partnership between Minoh City and Hutt City (February, Hutt City, New Zealand)

1 For information on the JET Programme, see the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website:

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/culture/people/youth/jet/index.html>

2 For information on the JET Programme, see the official website:

<https://jetprogramme.org/en/about-jet/>

3 Statistics New Zealand (as of 30 June 2025):

<https://www.stats.govt.nz/>

4 Source: Asia New Zealand Foundation, New Zealanders' Perceptions of Asia Survey:

<https://www.asiamediacentre.org.nz/highlights-of-the-new-zealanders-perceptions-of-asia-and-asian-peoples-2025-survey>



Column

Connecting through Culture, Partnership toward the Future — Asia, Africa, and Beyond —

The Japan Foundation (JF) has been advancing the “Partnership to Co-create a Future with the Next Generation: WA Project 2.0,” comprehensive people-to-people exchange programs with countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), spanning over a ten-year period beginning in 2014 in the fields of Japanese-language education, culture and the arts, Japanese studies, and global partnerships. Under the aims of promoting exchanges and developing human resources among the next generation, diverse exchanges continued to expand in 2025 as well.

As one of the pillars of this project, the “NIHONGO Partners” program has newly launched long-term dispatches to India. There, NIHONGO Partners work each day to serve as a bridge between Japan and India by assisting in Japanese-language classes and introducing Japanese culture as partners to local Japanese-language teachers and students at secondary schools and other educational institutions.

In the field of culture and the arts, the eight Southeast Asian film programmers who had visited Japan for the 2024 Tokyo International Film Festival organized and held special screening events in their respective countries in 2025, sharing the appeal of Japanese film culture with local audiences. In addition, in October, ten new Southeast Asian film programmers visited Japan to participate in the second year of the exchange program.

In the fields of Japanese studies and global partnerships, JF implemented the “ASEAN-Japan Youth Forum” (TASC), in which 28 university students from ASEAN and Japan engaged in group work and joint training sessions held in Japan and the Philippines, taking “plastic waste” as their theme under the vision of “co-creating a peaceful and better world by 2050.” Through the Forum, they presented action plans toward resolving the issue. In addition, with the cooperation of the ASEAN Secretariat, JF launched the “ASEAN-Japan Peace Ambassador Project (AJ PAP)” involving high school students. In the inaugural program held in 2025 — a milestone year marking the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II — 12 high school students from four countries gathered in Hiroshima, where they jointly engaged in activities including workshops drawing on testimonies of atomic bombing survivors and learning at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum. With a focus on the younger generation who will carry the future forward, the project aims to provide opportunities for mutual understanding through dialogue and collaboration and to cultivate the next generation of bridge-builders.

In Africa as well, capitalizing on the occasion of the Ninth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 9), JF carried out activities to expand interest in Japanese culture. These included anime song concerts in which artists who perform theme songs from hit Japanese anime were dispatched to Egypt and Côte d’Ivoire, as well as a large-scale Japanese film screening initiative entitled the “Japan Film Festival (JFF) Africa Tour” held in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Rwanda. JF will continue to broaden the circle of empathy through Japanese culture and plans to expand cultural and artistic exchanges in African countries in 2026 as well. In addition, in 2025, with the aim of promoting Japanese-language education in sub-Saharan Africa, JF joined as a co-organizer of the “Japanese-Language Education Conference in Africa,” which is held annually, facilitating the sharing of current conditions and challenges in Japanese-language education across each country. Teachers who participated in the conference have continued to exchange information even after its conclusion, including through reporting on their practices in Japanese-language teaching methodology.

Going forward, JF will continue to advance international cultural exchange that fosters empathy and trust among the next generation, not only in Asia and Africa, but throughout the world.



ASEAN-Japan Youth Forum (TASC) (September, Biñan, Philippines; Photo: The Japan Foundation)



Sub-Saharan African Japanese-Language Speech Contest (July 18, Antananarivo, Madagascar; Photo: The Japan Foundation)