

# Report on Project to Examine the Possibility of Working with the Next Generation of Nikkei



Next Generation Nikkei Program Discussion Group, the Nippon Foundation

# Contents



## Executive Summary

## Introduction

## Chapter 1 : Background of the Study Group Project

- 1 Current situation and issues related to the next-generation of Nikkei
- 2 Significance of thinking about a next-generation Nikkei project now

## Chapter 2 : Potential for New Collaboration Between Japan and Nikkei Communities

- 1 Challenges and proposals for promoting collaboration
- 2 Comments from study group members

## Chapter 3 : Project to Study Possibilities for Collaboration with the Next Generation of Nikkei

- 1 Implementation system
- 2 Record of implementation of the project
- 3 Exchange of opinions on the Nippon Foundation and Nikkei Scholarship Program

## Conclusion

# Executive Summary

## ■ Background

Japanese emigration overseas began to Hawaii in 1868, and to North and Latin America—which currently has the largest number of Nikkei—has a history of emigration spanning more than 120 years. Yet over this long span of history, the attributes of Nikkei have become more diversified over time, and there is no longer a fixed "image" of what a Nikkei is. In the past, many Nikkei belonged to Nikkei organizations and lived within their respective Nikkei communities, but today, many—particularly younger generations—do not belong to any specific Nikkei organization.

In contrast, younger next generations that are not part of Nikkei communities also have the potential of being important partners for Japan, and the Japanese government and private organizations have also developed a range of initiatives.

Yet three challenges come to light with the existing efforts being made.

- (1) No updates are being made regarding targets, implementing organizations, or project methodology
- (2) Lack of utilization of Nikkei and people of Japanese descent
- (3) Lack of coordination between various sectors

## ■ Objective

In light of the challenges outlined above, the purpose of this study group project is to reexamine whether collaborative efforts centered on the next generation of Nikkei are feasible. This study group is unique with respect to the following four respects.

- (1) Consider sustainable collaborative efforts not limited to conventional support project methods.
- (2) Rather than assuming that collaboration is possible, discuss whether such collaboration is really feasible, including specific players, targets, and methods.
- (3) Proactively utilize next-generation Nikkei who have not had the opportunity to voice their opinions but who are seeking to achieve something positive, without being limited by the boundaries of their existing organizations.
- (4) The project should not be completed by a single implementing organization, but should harness collaboration among sectors. To this

end, diverse sectors should be brought on board from the planning stage, and the results of the study should be widely shared at the 63rd Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad.

## ■ Proposal

Six leaders of the next generation of Nikkei were invited to act as members of the study group, and discuss the proposals under the direction of Mr. Alberto Matsumoto. As a result of the discussion, the specific suggestions for collaboration with the next generation of Nikkei were as follows.

### (1) Proposal to Japanese society for collaboration

Creation of opportunities to learn about the history and current circumstances involving Nikkei. Organization of events and training programs to recognize Nikkei as people with a good understanding of Japan.

Creating a roadmap for solving contemporary issues in Japanese society with Nikkei

### (2) Proposals for Nikkei in Japan

Visualization of children's education through a variety of studies.

Initiatives to reform the Japanese business world as a bearer of the third culture.

### (3) Proposals for Nikkei abroad

Development of partnerships with various Japanese organizations to become bearers of Japanese culture in their countries of residence.

Establishment of a communication coordinator training program.

### (4) Proposals for the next generation

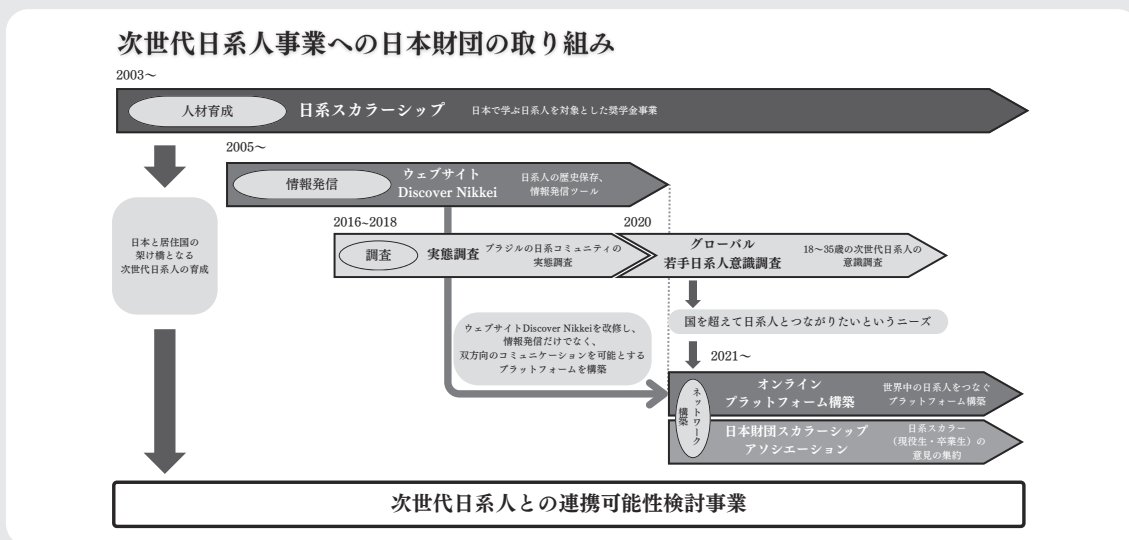
Promotion of acceptance of new "Nikkei" as bearers of Japanese culture, rather than isolating Nikkei and non-Nikkei.

Identification of trends and requirements of the new generation, and deliver the Nikkei legacy in a way that is accessible.

# Introduction

The Nippon Foundation, which organized this study group project, started supporting the Nikkei community in the 1970s. This support began with a desire to compensate the early generations of Nikkei who overcame hardships overseas under immigration policies of the time and built the foundation for today's Nikkei communities—this support initially focused on the development of cultural,

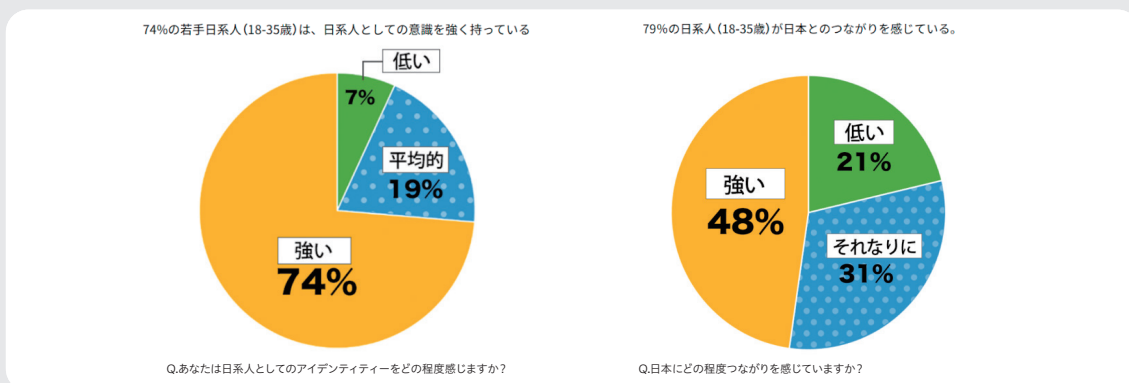
welfare, and sports facilities in the host countries. And in response to the needs of the times, this was followed by initiatives such as providing support for the restoration of Japanese nationality of displaced Japanese people and the "Nippon Foundation Nikkei Scholarship Program" aimed at cultivating the next generation of Nikkei leaders.



## Awareness surveys among Nikkei youth

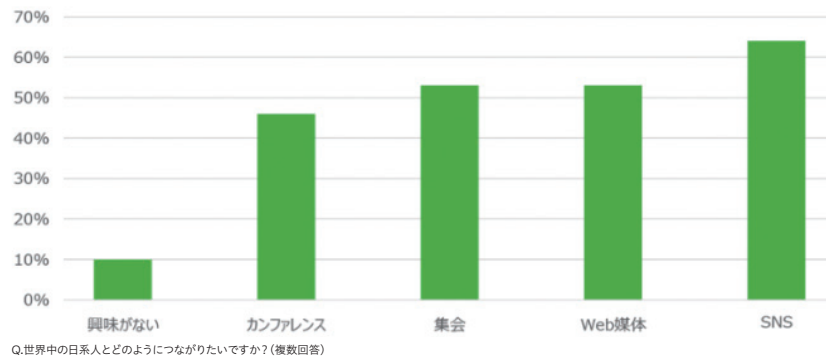
More than 150 years have passed since the first year of the Meiji Era, when the first mass emigration of Japanese occurred, and Nikkei communities in North and Latin America that have a long history are undergoing generational change. Young Nikkei born and raised in those areas view their Nikkei communities and their roots back in Japan differently compared to earlier generations. To develop programs that meet the contemporary requirements, the needs of today's young Nikkei and how they want to connect with Japan should be properly understood. To this end, the Nippon Foundation, in

cooperation with the Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles, USA), in 2020 conducted the "Nippon Foundation Global Nikkei Young Adult Research Project," an awareness survey of young adult Nikkei between the ages of 18 and 35. Nikkei organizations in various countries expressed concern that "younger Nikkei are more connected to their local communities with each generation and do not belong to local Nikkei organizations—they seem to have a weaker sense of identity as Nikkei." Yet the survey revealed that as many as 74% of the younger generation of Nikkei have a strong sense of





90%の若手日系人(18-35歳)は国を超えた日系人のつながりを求めている



Nikkei identity, and 79% feel a tie with Japan. It also found that 90% of young Nikkei want to have ties with Nikkei in other countries.

The survey results revealed that rather than a lower sense of Nikkei identity and awareness,

young Nikkei have inherited a strong sense of Nikkei identity and awareness and a desire to expand not only their ties with Japan, but also their lateral ties to Nikkei and communities in other countries.

## ■ Nippon Foundation initiatives in response to survey results

In response to the results of the survey, the Nippon Foundation launched and embarked on two initiatives in FY2021. The first is the development of an online platform. "Discover Nikkei<sup>1</sup>," a website launched in 2005 with support from the Nippon Foundation, provides information on Nikkei organizations around the world, Nikkei history and experiences, and other information related to Nikkei. To meet the needs of younger generations who are seeking ties with Nikkei beyond national borders, the Discover Nikkei website is being redeveloped to add features that allow users to interact with each other and to make it a platform for online connections. The new website is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2024, and upon launch, it is hoped that the next generation of Nikkei will be able to share their know-how on Nikkei communities and discuss global issues among a diverse group of Nikkei.

The second initiative is the implementation of a study group to explore possibilities of working with the next generation of Nikkei as reported in this document. We believe that young Nikkei who have a strong sense of Nikkei identity and a strong desire for ties with Japan are important, not as the target of "support," but also as partners who can "collaborate" and work together. As a venue for exploring how to achieve this "collaboration," a study group to discuss the possibility of collaboration with the next generation of Nikkei was held from April 2023

("Project to Study Possibilities for Collaboration with the Next Generation of Nikkei").

Six leaders of the next generation of Nikkei were invited to act as members of the study group, and under the direction of Mr. Alberto Matsumoto, the members have been discussing the possibility of collaboration with the next generation of Nikkei. It was an opportunity to exchange views on collaboration with the next generation of Nikkei from a diverse range of perspectives, irrespective of position, affiliation, or interest. The secretariat of the study group was covered by the Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad, an organization that has implemented a wide range of Nikkei projects over the years.

This report has been prepared to share the topics discussed by the study group and the specific initiatives proposed by each of its members. It is hoped that the report will find its way to those who are currently working for Nikkei communities, those exploring potential projects with young Nikkei, and as many "young Nikkei who will lead the next generation" as possible.

Supervisors of the Project to Study Possibilities for Collaboration with the Next Generation of Nikkei, the Nippon Foundation

<sup>1</sup> "Discover Nikkei" website : <https://discovernikkei.org/ja/>

# Chapter 1-1 : Current Situation and Issues Related to the Next-Generation of Nikkei

Japanese people and their descendants who emigrated from Japan are living in North America, Latin America, and elsewhere throughout the world. These people with roots in Japan are called "Nikkei," regardless of their nationality or how mixed their ethnicity may be. The first mass migration of Japanese was those who went to Hawaii over 150 years ago to work on sugar cane plantations. Starting with the migrations to Hawaii, many Japanese moved to the U.S. mainland, Canada, Peru, Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina, and other countries in North and Latin America—many also migrated throughout Southeast Asia such as the Philippines and Indonesia, although the circumstances driving that migration differed. Japanese people worked hard and struggled under unfamil-

iar farming systems and harsh working conditions in the countries they migrated to, but they also assisted each other and formed rich communities of Nikkei that developed to their current level.

Although communities of Nikkei took root around the world, including the birth of eighth-generation Nikkei in Hawaii, it is also true that Nikkei communities are losing their sense of unity as interest in the Japanese language and culture wanes. With each passing generation, people of Japanese descent are becoming increasingly disengaged from their Nikkei communities.

This chapter discusses the historical background leading up to current Nikkei communities as well as the current circumstances and challenges faced by next-generation Nikkei.

## 1. Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad and the Association of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad created from the Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia (LARA)

Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia (LARA) refers to special relief goods sent to Japan when it was suffering in the wake of WW2. The "Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia" is an aid organization formed by private American volunteers that played a central role in sending over 40 billion yen in supplies, comprising mainly of food and clothing, to Japan over a six-year period from 1946 to 1952. Approximately one-fifth of the relief supplies—some 8 billion yen—were said to have been collected by people of Japanese descent. Japanese American aid organizations were established not only in the United States but also in Canada, Mexico, Brazil, Ar-

gentina, Peru, Chile, and other countries, and relief activities were initiated through LARA via the Red Cross in each country.

In response to the support of Japanese expats and Nikkei, members of the Diet called for a welcoming ceremony in "Recognition of Japanese expats and Nikkei residents for their hardships during and after the war and expression of gratitude for their love of fellow countrymen," with the "Nikkei Friendship Convention in Commemoration of United Nations Membership" held in 1957 as the first Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad. The "Nikkei & Japanese Abroad Liaison Association" formed to organize this convention served as the launching pad for the Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad. The second Convention was held in 1960, and renamed the Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad.

The Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad that has been held since can be said to mirror the history of the Nikkei community. While the number of participants has decreased from times gone, the number of participating countries is on the rise. This may reflect both the diminishing Nikkei identity as generations progress, and the global spread of the Nikkei community. "要望書" (lit: request memo, or petition) have been compiled since the third Convention held in 1962, and details of these "Requests"



LARA monument in Minato Mirai, Yokohama

reveal the challenges faced by the Nikkei community at the time, such as the establishment of the Center for Nikkei Abroad, promotion of emigration, expansion of loans for emigrants, support for elderly first- and second-generation Nikkei, recognition of atomic bomb survivors abroad, consideration for Nikkei in the Philippines and Korea, and allowing voting overseas. Beginning with the 45th Convention in 2004, the content of discussions was raised as the "Convention Declaration," rather than "Requests." This name change is a clear indication of the position that Nikkei are no longer an extension of the Japanese government's immigration policy for assistance, but should be partners of Japan. Beginning with the 57th Convention in 2016, there was also a major change in the administrative structure, making simultaneous interpretation available in four languages (Japanese, English, Portuguese, and Spanish). This was because discussions at the Convention could no longer be conducted solely in Japanese or with the help of some bilingual participants.

While adapting to the times, the current Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad has been held in this way annually to bring Nikkei from around the world together in Japan, with the aim of strengthening mutual friendship, discussing the challenges faced by the Nikkei community, and finding ways to cooperate amongst Nikkei communities or between Nikkei communities and Japan.

In 2023, the 63rd Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad was held under the theme "Making Great Strides for the Nikkei Community, A New

Generation of Initiatives," and was attended by many Japanese and Nikkei abroad. Discussion panels touched on the activities of young Nikkei leaders skilled in internet technologies, such as the implementation of online events harnessing new concepts in the post-COVID era and the activities of Nikkei groups to attract younger generations. The discussions also highlighted common challenges such as the education of children of Nikkei in Japan and the welfare of elderly first- and second-generation Nikkei in North and Latin America—there are still common problems related to education of children and welfare of the elderly in countries of emigration and in Japan.



The 59th Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad in Hawaii to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Japanese immigration (2018)

## 2. History of Japanese migration abroad and the current status of the next-generation Nikkei

### 2.1 Hawaii, USA

In 1868, a group of 153 emigrants traveled to Hawaii on the "Scioto" to work on sugar plantations. These were the so-called *gannenmono*, or "first-year people" who become the pioneers of Japanese overseas migration. The *gannenmono* were forced to work under extreme conditions in unfamiliar environments, and of those who completed their three-year stint, about half moved to the U.S. mainland, around ten returned to Japan, and the rest remained in Hawaii.

The arrival of migrants was suspended for a short

while, but in 1885 emigration to Hawaii resumed and sparked a new wave of overseas migration. Yet the rapid increase in the number of immigrants following the Sino-Japanese War gradually led to discrimination against the Japanese and anti-Japanese sentiments. As a result, measures were taken in 1904 in main destinations to restrict immigration, leading to the conclusion of the Gentlemen's Agreement in 1908 between Japan and the United States for regulating immigration to the United States, ending the era of mass migration.



In 1941, the Japanese military's attack on Pearl Harbor initiated the Pacific War, leading to the forced relocation of some Japanese residents in Hawaii and the mainland, including the second generation who were born in the United States, to internment camps. In 1943, during WWII, the 442nd Central Postal Directory was formed by Nisei volunteers, who fought valiantly on the European front—becoming the most highly decorated unit in American military history, while also suffering immense casualties.

After the war, retirement of the Issei, who had played a leading role in the Nikkei community, was followed by the Nisei becoming the mainstay of the community, while the influence of the Sansei grew stronger. And with greater assimilation into local society, Nikkei became active in a variety of sectors, including politics, economics and culture. In 1959, Daniel K. Inouye, a second-generation Japanese American, formerly of the 442nd Central Postal Directory, became the first Japanese American to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives. From 1963, he served in the Senate for nearly 50 years, contributing greatly to the friendship between the United States and Japan. Subsequently, Sansei social activists as well as Daniel K. Inouye and the Nisei Spark Matsunaga, another Japanese-American congressman, made efforts to demand an apology and reparations for wartime internment, giving rise to the Civil Liberties Act (Restitution for World War II Internment of Japanese-Americans and Aleuts) that passed in 1988. Beginning in 1990, each surviving internee received \$20,000 in compensation and a letter of apology signed by the President of the United States.

The status of the Nikkei community in recent years, in the U.S., where the percentage of elderly Nikkei is high, Nikkei community has long worked to resolve the issues of the elderly, including the

improvement of welfare facilities for Nikkei senior citizens. Yet in Los Angeles, problems arose such as welfare facilities for Nikkei senior citizens constructed by Nikkei communities that were sold off.

Meanwhile, Los Angeles has hosted the “Nisei Week” Japanese Festival since 1934, continuing the legacy of the Japanese and Nikkei through art and culture. In 1992, the “Japanese American National Museum” was opened with the aim of deepening understanding and awareness of America's ethnic and cultural diversity by preserving and showcasing the Japanese American experience. Furthermore, the Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii, a Japanese American history museum located in Honolulu, explores the Kachikan values cherished by the Nikkei in Hawaii, such as “Gisei (sacrifice), Giri (sense of duty), Meiyo (honor), Haji and Hokori (shame and pride), Sekinin (responsibility), Chugi (loyalty), Kansha (gratitude), Shikata ga Nai (acceptance with resignation), Ganbari (persistence), Gaman (quiet endurance), On (debt of gratitude), and Koko (filial piety).



Exhibit at Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i

## 2.2 South America

### 2.2.1 Peru

Peru was the first destination for mass migration of Japanese to South America. After Japan and Peru established diplomatic relations in 1873, the immigrant ship Sakura Maru arrived at Callao Port in Peru in 1899, carrying 790 contract immigrants (contract laborers for sugar plantations). After working on the sugar plantations, the immigrants

later became involved in the cultivation of cotton. Many Japanese immigrants died of malaria and endemic diseases during this period. Some were resettled in Bolivia due to the harsh working conditions.

Between World War I and World War II, many Japanese moved to Lima and Callao and set up businesses such as barbers and restaurants. The

"Japanese Association" was also established in 1913. Schools were also established to educate the children of immigrants based on the assumption that they would return to Japan.

From 1930 onward, there was a growing anti-Japanese movement developing. Anti-Japanese actions aimed at Japanese immigrants were prompted with a law established in 1932 that required 80% of hired workers to be Peruvian, and negative sentiments peaked with the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941. The Peruvian government legally restricted the economic activities of Japanese people and groups, and confiscated the property of Japanese immigrants and Japanese language schools. Many of those in leadership roles among the Peruvian Nikkei were arrested and sent to internment camps in the United States.

In 1947, Japanese organizations resumed their activities and new Japanese language schools were established. In the 1950s, economic conditions throughout the Japanese-Peruvian community began to thrive and recover. In 1990, Peru became the first country to appoint to head of state a person of Japanese Descent, second-generation Nikkei named Alberto Fujimori. In 2005, the Japanese government and the Nippon Foundation provided support for the construction of a Japanese Peruvian

Centennial Clinic in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Peru. The hospital is also staffed by Nikkei doctors who have trained and studied in Japan, contributing to the medical care and welfare services in Peru. In addition, the Peruvian Nikkei community, led by the Peruvian Japanese Association (APJ) has forged a solid position, with the royal family of Japan visiting during anniversary events such as the centennial anniversary of the Japanese immigration to Peru.



The Peruvian Japanese Association (APJ)

### 2.2.2 Brazil

While immigration to North America was restricted at the start of the 20th century, the increase in coffee cultivation and the development of rural and suburban agriculture in the southern regions of Brazil led to demand for agricultural workers. Meanwhile, overpopulation and economic recession in Japan had left many rural areas in recession, and the Great Kanto Earthquake and the Great Depression resulted in mass unemployment.

Under such national conditions, in 1908, the Kasato Maru arrived at the port of Santos, Brazil with 781 contract immigrants, sparking emigration to Brazil. From this point on, the focus of migration shifted from North America to South America. Japanese immigrants began cultivating the land, resulting in the rise of areas run by Japanese. In these colonies, Japanese associations were established with the aim of building friendship and providing mutual assistance. In anticipation of returning to Japan, the immigrants set up schools in various locations and

focused on the education of children.



The Kasato Maru (JICA Yokohama, Japanese Overseas Migration Museum)

After the war, overseas migration was promoted as part of measures to address overpopulation and

food problems. As a result of these efforts, destinations expanded to Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia, Argentina, and Dominica, with migrant numbers reaching a peak between 1956 and 1961. Of these, emigration to Brazil accounted for 80% of the total, but with the rapid development of the Japanese economy, the number of overseas migrants began to decline from around 1962.

The São Paulo Japan Culture Association, the predecessor of the Brazilian Society of Japanese Culture and Social Assistance, was established in 1955, and remains a core organization of Japanese organizations in Brazil. There is also a Nikkei social welfare organization that began as a mutual aid organization for the Issei, and which focuses on the welfare, medical care and welfare-related activities of its members. The Japan Immigrant Aid Society (Beneficiary Association for Japan-Brazil in Sao Paulo) was founded in 1959, and operates medical facilities, mobile clinics, nursing homes for the elderly, and child welfare centers. In addition, there are many other prefectural societies and Japanese associations in each region with sports facilities and Japanese language schools.

Yet Japanese associations and other Nikkei organizations in each region are suffering from a decline in Nikkei members and a lack of successors due to the younger generation's disengagement from Nikkei communities. As values become more diversified, an increasing number of younger generations are not attracted to the Japanese language, culture and values, and are not participating in activities. The generational shift in Nikkei organizations has not always been successful due to differences in the perception of values between older and younger generations. Active members of Nikkei organizations such as women's association members, Nikkei Japanese language school teachers, and board members are aging, and the number of volunteer members is declining. The revenue that the Nikkei Association earns from its membership fees—which is used as a source of financing for continuing

the Nikkei organization—has also decreased in line with the drop in membership, and the pandemic has resulted in an overall decline in income from the Nikkei organization's "Kaikan" halls or sports facility rentals, income from Japanese culinary events, income from the Japanese language school, and other sources. The last few years have dealt a major blow to the survival of Japanese associations.

While younger Nikkei are leaving Nikkei organizations, an increasing number of non-Nikkei have developed a growing interest in Japan through traditional Japanese culture, Japanese food, anime, and other pop culture, and have become active members who are vital to the survival of Nikkei organizations by actively participating in organized events. The challenge is how to incorporate non-Japanese people into the organization's operations and activities without being constrained by old concepts.

Immigrants and Nikkei who settled in destination countries are proud of their roots, and have worked diligently and invested in their children's education in their host countries. This earned them the reputation of "Japonais Garantido" (reliable Japanese), and today Nikkei enjoy the high status they have achieved. The diligent work ethic brought by their ancestors formed a sense of value that the Nikkei possessed and passed on to their descendants as a legacy of the Nikkei people. Yet as the Nikkei are now in their fourth and fifth generations, there are concerns that interest in the Japanese language and culture will wane.

Meanwhile, there is a growing momentum in recent years to revise these senses of values and better pass them on—a movement has kicked off in Brazil as a "Generation Project" to convey the eight values that Nikkei hold dear (cooperation, gratitude, kindness, respect, responsibility, learning, honesty, and perseverance). The current challenge that the Nikkei community is facing is how to increase the number of young leaders who will pioneer the Nikkei community's activities and how to nurture them in the future.

## 2.3 Philippines

Japanese immigration to the Philippines after the Meiji period began in 1903 with the construction of the Benguet Road in Baguio on Luzon Island. Many Japanese immigrants also settled in the Philippines to engage in the cultivation of Manila hemp

in Davao on Mindanao Island. The "Davao Japanese Association" was established in 1918 in Davao, with its membership reaching 3,644 people in two years. Following the founding of the Ota Kogyo and Furukawa Takushoku Abaca plantations, up to



20,000 Nikkei were residing in the area at the start of the Showa period. Many elementary and junior high schools were established and developed significantly around Mindanao, yet with the outbreak of World War II, Japanese troops marched into the Philippines, and Japanese residents in Mindanao were forced to cooperate with the war effort. After the war ended, most of the Japanese immigrants returned home, but many Filipino wives and their children remained in the Philippines. The anti-Japanese sentiment in the Philippines forced the Japanese children to hide their identity for a long time. The children were separated from their Japanese father and lost their properties and documents due to the war, and have continuously appealed for the restoration of their Japanese citizenship. As these Japanese children continue to get older, the Philippine Nikkei-jin Legal Support Center currently continues to play a central role with activities related to registering nationality. The Nippon Foundation has long supported these activities.

The Filipino Japanese Foundation of Northern Luzon was established in 1972 in Baguio City, and the Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai (Davao) was founded in 1980. Filipino-Nikkei took part in the Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad for the first time from 1982, highlighting the presence of the Philippine Nikkei community. Compared to circumstances in North America and Latin America at the time, revival of the Philippine Nikkei community was delayed due to being directly affected by the war. Nikkei at the time had no funds or facilities, but had a strong

desire to pass along the Japanese language and culture to their children in some form.

Today, there are many Nikkei organizations throughout the Philippines led by the Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai, and Nikkei schools, including kindergartens and subsequently high schools, opened from 1992, followed by the Nikkei university “Mindanao Kokusai Daigaku” in 2002—many Nikkei and Filipinos are studying Japanese language and culture. The Philippine-Japan Historical Museum, which showcases the history of Japanese immigration and Nikkei in the Philippines, reopened in Davao in 2020. There is anticipation that the Nikkei community will further unite to carry on and spread the history of Nikkei people, as well as the Japanese language and culture.



Mindanao Kokusai Daigaku  
(Mindanao International College)

### 3. Movements after the amendment of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act

In 1990, the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act was amended to allow Nikkei up to the third generation to obtain Japanese visas as “permanent residents” with no restrictions on work activities. This led to a large number of Nikkei, mainly from Brazil and Peru, to come to Japan for work, leading to a migrant worker boom in Japan, due to deteriorating economic conditions in Latin American countries and labor shortages in line with the rapid growth of the Japanese economy. The Japanese government welcomed them in without providing sufficient education for their children, and many Nikkei came to Japan without any understanding of the Japanese language or customs.

Nikkei arriving in Japan for work faced various problems related to exploitation, including not joining the pension system because they initially only planned to stay for a short period of time, or temporary employment agencies not allowing them to join the social insurance system for the agency’s own benefit. In addition, many of these Nikkei did not fit in smoothly with Japanese society, due to a lack of Japanese language skills or insufficient knowledge of Japanese culture and customs.

In terms of children’s education, foreign children were not obliged to attend school—their lack of Japanese language skills, failure to adapt to Japanese customs, bullying, lack of understanding by

parents regarding higher education and schooling, difficulties in communication between parents and children due to language problems, and busy schedules have led to major problems such as truancy, poor school performance, and delinquency. To handle such challenges, consultation services were launched in Portuguese and Spanish in various regions, and support from in various forms gradually grew, including support for Japanese language education by the national government, local governments, non-profit organizations, and other entities, the establishment of international classes and Japanese language classes in the public education system, and the allocation of additional teachers.

Three decades after the migrant worker boom, more and more Nikkei are settling in Japan, purchasing real estate, and starting businesses. There are also second and third generations born in Japan, and the percentage of students going on to high school and university is gradually increasing, with some passing the national medical and bar examinations, and others going on to graduate school to become researchers. Under such circumstances, the challenges faced by Nikkei in Japan have become increasingly complex and diverse, ranging from Nikkei children unable to adapt to educational and cultural aspects, to language problems inherited by Nikkei children, identity issues, and welfare issues associated with the aging of the Japanese population. Even for those born in Japan, there are still many children of Nikkei who struggle with their own identity, often asking themselves: "What nationality am I?" and "Why I am in Japan?" This inability to discover themselves and develop a sense of self-esteem hinders their sound mental development and causes problems such as truancy and failure to attend school.

While the number of Nikkei who have settled in Japan has increased, many of them are still in precarious employment situations, with roles such as dispatch workers and contractors on short-term contracts, and many are still in the vulnerable posi-

tion of being the first to be laid off in times of economic crisis, highlighted by the economic downturn following the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008. There are also many other challenges, such as poverty amongst the elderly due to lack of pension coverage and the small number of facilities where they are able to receive care in their native language.

Furthermore, Nikkei children who were forced to return to their home countries with their families due to a range of circumstances such as those following Lehman Shock may be able to speak Japanese well but may not fully understand their parents' native language, or may experience reverse culture shock and have difficulty fitting in their parents' home country—some of them wish to return to Japan, but fourth-generation adult Nikkei find it difficult to obtain a permanent resident visa. Yet providing opportunities for these Nikkei with multilingual and multicultural backgrounds to work in Japan or their countries of residence as people serving as a bridge between their countries and promoting the development of human resources will lead to self-affirmation, and will be of great benefit to Japan, their countries of residence, and the Nikkei community.

With each new generation, the number of third-generation Nikkei who are able to come to Japan as permanent residents will decrease, and a decline in talent exchange is forecast going forward. The "Acceptance Program for the Fourth-generation Japanese," or the so-called "Fourth-generation Visa (Designated Activities)" established in July 2018, has been problematic due to the low number of applicants arising from the requirements of the program, such as Japanese language proficiency, inability to bring family members, and age restrictions. Yet in light of this situation, some requirements were relaxed in December 2023, and there will be a keen focus on future developments.

#### 4. Japanese Government Policy on Nikkei

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the Immigration Division in 1953 and the Immigration Bureau in 1955, and in the same year, the Overseas Emigration Council was established to promote overseas migration. Since then, Japan's policy toward the Nikkei community has been based on the

Council's reports and opinions.

The 1962 Report of the Emigration Council presented the basic concept of Japan's overseas migration and emigration policy. The basic concept of the overseas migration policy was that "It should contribute to the development abilities of the adopted

country, thus benefiting the welfare of the world, allowing Japan and the Japanese people to be highly appraised internationally," and included measures for dissemination of knowledge, guidance and assistance, and protection of migrants.

A 1993 report released by the Overseas Emigration Council noted that second to fourth-generation people have become the nuclei of Nikkei communities and have actively contributed to the economic and social development of their countries, and praised the significant role they play in bilateral relations between Japan and their countries—the presence of Nikkei plays an important role in strengthening friendly relationships between Japan and their countries. The report notes that measures supporting migrants are necessary and appropriate up to the third generation who have a close living relationship with the migrants themselves in migration projects, as the government should support migrants sent to Latin America as a matter of national policy. Furthermore, as the number of migrants to Latin American countries has been decreasing, the report mentions revising support measures that inspire and encourage emigration, ensuring stable living standards of emigrants, expanding welfare measures for the elderly, and promoting measures for issues such as for those of Japanese descent working in Japan. The report outlines that measures geared toward Nikkei should focus on cultivating people who have an understanding of Japan, providing specialized knowledge through JICA and other organizations, and cooperating with Nikkei for dispatch of Nikkei experts to third countries.

The 2000 report of the Overseas Emigration Council highlights the basic principle that Nikkei are in a position to understand both their adopted countries and Japan, and can serve as a "bridge" between Japan and their adopted countries. Furthermore, the relationship between Japan and Nikkei communities overseas should be one of mutually beneficial cooperation that adapts to the needs of recipients, and thus it is important to shift from "support" to "cooperation." Specific measures to support migrants include the welfare of elderly migrants, the development of facilities for migrant areas, the accurate assessment, recording and preservation of migration history, and the development and dissemination of information in migration archives. Support for maintaining and promoting

relations with Nikkei communities overseas include Japanese language education, cultural exchange, promotion of exchange on an individual level, and cooperation in the areas of development, economics, and technology, as well as support for Nikkei working in Japan.

In 2014, Prime Minister Abe visited Latin America and stated in Sao Paulo that the trust that Nikkei have built up is the foundation of trust of Japan in Latin America, and that he will continue to carry on and grow that trust. It also included strengthening ties with young leaders in the Latin American Nikkei community and strengthening ties through efforts to create a Japan of which Nikkei can be proud, together with active support for the Nikkei community by enhancing training, study abroad and invitation programs, supporting the spread of Japanese language education, increasing the number of participants in Nikkei community next-generation development training programs, and increasing the number of Nikkei community volunteers.

The "Report of the Panel of Experts on Collaborating with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and Descendants ("Nikkei") in Latin America and the Caribbean" was established in 2017, and as part of the aforementioned policy of Prime Minister Abe, it highlights the importance of boosting cooperation between Latin American Nikkei communities and Japan, working together so that the new generation of Nikkei will take an interest in their roots and Japan and carry the sense of confidence that the Nikkei community has gained in Latin America. The basic principles are to contribute to the mutual development of Japan and Latin America, and to promote the networking of various Japanese entities with Latin American Nikkei communities, with the aim of appealing to and communicating Japan to Latin American societies together through cooperation with projects and events developed by the Nikkei community—and these form the basis of current policies.

Until now, support projects funded by the Japanese side have been the main focus, and policies have often focused on Latin America, where many emigrants were sent as part of national policy. Yet Nikkei are expanding into adopted countries beyond Latin America to Europe, Southeast Asia, and other parts of the world. Going forward, fact-finding surveys and research on the Nikkei community will

need to be run in a wide range of regions to learn about the current situation and the challenges they face, and to find out what needs to be done.

Instead of Japan providing funds in a unilateral

manner as it has done in the past, measures will be required in the future to promote cooperation with the global Nikkei community as a partner on equal footing.

The Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad

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# Chapter 1-2 : Significance of Thinking About a Next-generation Nikkei Project Now

## ■ Background of the project

Japanese emigration overseas began to Hawaii in 1868, and to North and Latin America—which currently has the largest number of Nikkei—has a history of emigration spanning more than 120 years. The timing, backgrounds, and host countries of emigrants vary widely, and people with roots in Japan still live all over the world. Yet with each new generation, the attributes of Nikkei have become more diversified, and there is no longer a fixed "image" of what a Nikkei is. In the past, many Nikkei belonged to Nikkei organizations and lived within their respective Nikkei communities, but today, many—particularly younger generations—do not belong to any specific Nikkei organization. The early migrants faced unimaginable difficulties, and the Japanese government and private organizations have provided various forms of cooperation as compensation

for their hardships and to help them settle in to their lives in their adopted countries. Such cooperation will continue to be vital going forward against the backdrop of continued aging population and other factors.

In contrast, younger generations that are not part of Nikkei communities also have the potential of being important partners for Japan. The Japanese government and private organizations have developed a range of initiatives aimed at developing the relationship between Japan and Nikkei communities "from support to collaboration." Specific initiatives include scholarships and invitation programs for Nikkei studying in Japan, surveys for determining trends among young Nikkei, and international conferences for young Nikkei.

## ■ Initiatives by the Japanese government and private organizations

This section outlines the main activities of the Japanese government and private organizations that are developing initiatives related to Nikkei. Other important organizations contributing to the devel-

opment of Nikkei communities include cultural and sports associations, Nikkei and Japanese language schools, Nikkei newspapers, and non-profits run by young Nikkei.

### 1. Japanese Government

#### (1) Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs established the Immigration Division in 1953 and the Immigration Bureau in 1955, and in the same year, the Overseas Emigration Council was established to promote overseas migration. Since then, Japan's policy toward the Nikkei community has been based on the Council's reports and opinions.

In 2023, the Division for Collaboration with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and Descendants ("Nikkei") in Latin America (the "Promotion Division") was established under the Latin American and Caribbean Affairs Bureau with the view to strengthen ties with Nikkei throughout Latin

America. The aim of establishing the Promotion Division is to "develop and implement policies to further strengthen ties with Nikkei communities in the Latin American region" and "actively provide support to Nikkei communities in the Latin American region." More specifically, young Nikkei slated to lead the next generation are invited to Japan, and support is provided for local Japanese cultural projects and networking among Nikkei communities. In cooperation with JICA and other organizations, the Promotion Division also provides various types of support for activities and facilities of local Nikkei organizations.

#### (2) Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) has been running the "Project of Interchange, Cooperation and Business Creation for Nikkei Farmers of Latin America" since 2011. The purpose of this project is to promote and strength-

en cooperation and exchange between Japanese companies and Nikkei agricultural entities, persons, and institutions involved in the agriculture and food industries in Latin American countries. It also promotes the development of Japan's food industry in

Latin America, with the aim of securing overseas

demand.

## 2. Kenjinkai, prefectures

### (1) Kenjinkai

Kenjinkais exist in each country, which facilitate exchange with Japanese prefectures and other activities. An example that illustrates this is in Brazil, where an organization called the Federação das

Associações de Províncias do Japão no Brasil plans and organizes the world's largest Japanese festival (drawing about 2 million guests).

### (2) Prefectures

In cooperation with the Kenjinkai of each country, prefectures themselves conduct exchange activities with Nikkei. As an example, Okinawa Prefecture has since 1990 held a "Worldwide Uchinanchu Festival" every five years. This festival commemorates the achievements of people of Okinawan descent from

around the world, expands and develops the Uchina network through exchanges with Okinawans, and gathers in the home of Okinawa to verify members' roots and identities and pass them on to future generations.

## 3. Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Inheriting the activities of its predecessor, the Japan Emigration Service, JICA has been providing assistance to those who emigrated to Latin America mainly under the government's postwar policies aimed at supporting emigrants to settle down and life comfortably in their host countries. In light of the challenges posed by the maturity and generational changes occurring throughout Nikkei communities, JICA is working to support emigrants, primarily in the areas of welfare for the elderly and human resource development.

JICA is also strengthening its efforts to collaborate with Nikkei communities with the aim of strengthening ties between Japan and migrants and Nikkei who play an active role in a wide range of fields. Specifically, the "Program for Developing Leaders in Nikkei Communities," "Training Program for Nikkei Communities" and "Education Program for Nikkei Next Generation" are some of the programs inviting Nikkei to Japan to cultivate human resources.

## 3. The Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad

The Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad, which also acts as the secretariat for this project for examining the possibility of working with the next generation of Nikkei, is an organization that has been implementing projects related to Nikkei for many years.

Specifically, the Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad engages in a wide variety of activities, including friendship exchanges with Nikkei abroad (such as holding Conventions of Nikkei), hosting

various Nikkei trainees and students (commissioned by JICA and the Nippon Foundation), supporting Nikkei and emigrants overseas (such as dispatching Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers), consolidating and disseminating information on Nikkei in Japan, teaching Japanese language, managing the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum (in Yokohama), and conducting surveys and research on Nikkei.

## 4. Various surveys

The following is a list of surveys conducted in recent years, in chronological order of implementa-

tion, to ascertain the actual circumstances of Nikkei communities.



### (1) Survey of Nikkei Communities in the Multicultural Society of Brazil (Center for Japanese-Brazilian Studies)

[https://nw.org.br/report/?fbclid=IwAR3cQ5v0-kmh-846gK\\_FK8vPHkb78sl6Y1UxIOex54oHnjptXVcJ7RoM-V5OI](https://nw.org.br/report/?fbclid=IwAR3cQ5v0-kmh-846gK_FK8vPHkb78sl6Y1UxIOex54oHnjptXVcJ7RoM-V5OI)

The survey was conducted by the Center for Japanese-Brazilian Studies with a grant from the Nippon Foundation. The purpose of the survey was to clarify the roles and influence of Nikkei communities in Brazil in its increasingly diversifying society, and to visualize Nikkei communities as a whole in specific terms.

The survey covered actual circumstances at cultural associations, cultural and sports associations, Japan-Brazil associations, and other organizations that are cherished throughout Brazilian society as “kaikans.” The survey revealed that these organizations have be-

come “conduits for creating the image of Nikkei in communities” and have developed a solid reputation of trust for Nikkei throughout Brazilian society. It was found that people in Brazilian society have witnessed and praised the cooperation, efficiency, planning, discipline, and integrity of the Nikkei people with the activities of these “Kaikan.” The report also revealed that relatively young urban Sansei Nikkei view such praise as their sense of “value,” and are discussing how to apply them to Brazilian society and business situations. The results of the survey indicated that, despite fears that Nikkei communities are vanishing, the underlying Japanese spirit is clearly being inherited, and Nikkei themselves are making efforts to preserve their own core values as Nikkei.

### (2) The Nippon Foundation Global Nikkei Young Adult Research Project (The Nippon Foundation and the Japanese American National Museum)

<https://www.nippon-foundation.or.jp/who/news/pr/2020/20200831-48496.html>

As mentioned in the Introduction of this report, in 2020, the Nippon Foundation conducted an awareness survey of young adult Nikkei between the ages of 18 and 35. This is the first such awareness survey covering Nikkei on a global scale.

Young Nikkei who were thought to have a lower sense of Nikkei identity and awareness have actually inherited a strong sense of identity and awareness as Nikkei, and a desire to expand not only their ties with Japan, but also their lateral ties to Nikkei and communities in other countries.

### (3) Survey on Actual Conditions in Latin American Nikkei Communities (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

[https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/la\\_c/sa/page22\\_004077.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/la_c/sa/page22_004077.html)

The Latin American Affairs and Caribbean Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan conducts the “Survey on Actual Conditions in Latin American Nikkei Communities” with the aim of gaining an insight into the realities of Nikkei communities throughout Latin American countries that are evolving due to generational changes, and uses the results of the survey as a reference when considering policies related to Nikkei communities in Latin America. The purpose of this awareness survey is to gain an understanding of the current status and social activities of the next generation of Nikkei, as well as their expectations and attitudes to-

ward Japan. As of March 2024, the most recent survey was conducted in FY2022.

The survey also reveals that many Nikkei are proud of Japanese heritage and have an interest, curiosity, and admiration for Japan, even after several generations. The “Summary and Discussion” of the FY2022 survey discusses the need for a fresh awareness of the diversifying Nikkei population, the differences and common traits in backgrounds and circumstances of each country, the significance of Nikkei organizations in each country, and the effectiveness of their activities. Various future measures have also been raised based on the results of the survey.

### Awareness of challenges behind the implementation of the study group project

The various efforts and surveys thus far have created an image of contemporary Nikkei and

the current circumstances underpinning Nikkei communities. Young Nikkei are also clearly proud

of their Nikkei heritage, and some have already started working on maintaining their Nikkei values and roots, and seeking ways to connect with other Nikkei. In light of this, a fresh approach is required when considering how to collaborate with the next

generation of Nikkei who share these aspirations.

When exploring such potential collaboration, three challenges come to light with the existing efforts being made.

### **1. No updates are being made regarding targets, implementing organizations, or project methodology**

When accessing Nikkei communities from Japan, points of contact are and have always been chiefly via Nikkei organizations with a long history. Yet given the growing number of young Nikkei who do not belong to these organizations, these organizations may not necessarily be representative of "Nikkei communities." There are many next-generation Nikkei who remain unknown, let alone being able to acquire feedback from them.

With regards to project methodology, various attempts have been made at approaching collaboration, but realistically it has been challenging trying to break away from the established mold of providing "support from Japan to Nikkei communities." Even when useful discussions are held at meetings, leading them to future actions remains a challenge, and such topics end up merely momentary opinions.

### **2. Lack of utilization of Nikkei and people of Japanese descent**

Japanese people have worked diligently and industriously in their adopted countries, and in many cases, they have become highly respected members of their local communities. In contrast, Japan's presence is clearly on a slow decline compared to the period of economic growth until around the 1980s. Despite Nikkei around the world supposedly being

strong friends of Japan, it can be said that Japan is failing to fully harness the capabilities of these people. Many Nikkei leaders have been cultivated through scholarships and invitation programs, and their human resources and networks could surely be used more effectively.

### **3. Lack of coordination between various sectors**

The number of sectors focusing on reaching out to Nikkei communities from Japan are relatively limited, and greater dissemination of information could lead to more effective collaboration through

mutually beneficial programs. Yet as things stand currently, each sector is taking its own individual initiatives, and is unable to share their knowledge with other sectors.

### **Purpose of this study group project**

In light of the challenges outlined above, the purpose of this study group project is to reexamine whether collaborative efforts centered on the next generation of Nikkei are feasible. This study group is unique with respect to the following four respects.

- (1) Consider sustainable collaborative efforts not limited to conventional support project methods.
- (2) Rather than assuming that collaboration is possible, discuss whether such collaboration is really feasible, including specific players, targets, and methods.
- (3) Proactively utilize next-generation Nikkei who

have not had the opportunity to voice their opinions but who are seeking to achieve something positive, without being limited by the boundaries of their existing organizations.

- (4) The project should not be completed by a single implementing organization, but should harness collaboration among sectors. To this end, diverse sectors should be brought on board from the planning stage, and the results of the study should be widely shared at the 63rd Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad.

We would like to emphasize that this study

group is a project that was launched with the aim of providing a forum to discuss the possibility of collaboration with the next-generation Nikkei from

a variety of perspectives, irrespective of position, affiliation, or interest.

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# Chapter 2-1 : Challenges and Proposals for Promoting Collaboration

Alberto Matsumoto

## 1. Proposal to Japanese Society for Collaboration

The history of Japanese emigration overseas can be tracked back more than a century. Yet this fact is not widely known in Japanese society. The first step is to ensure that the history of overseas migration is more widely known as part of education in Japan and society as a whole. We need to work to include this information in school textbooks and make it better known to the general public that Japan also experienced poverty in the past, and explain that with the large numbers of migrants to North America, Asia and Latin America, how some of their descendants are now living in Japan.

Furthermore, students of Japanese descent in junior high school, high school, and university come to Japan every year under JICA's Nikkei community next-generation development training program, and through this program, they have opportunities to interact with young people of the same age groups in Japan. On the other hand, some Japanese universities and graduate schools, such as the research center operating under Dr. Fujikake at Yokohama National University, have departments and laboratories that are actively engaged in exchange and study abroad programs with Latin America. In order to foster understanding between Japan and other participating countries, organizations such as JICA, the Nippon Foundation and The Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad need to work together to review existing scholarship and training programs, increase opportunities for exchange with Japanese people, and provide more indirect or partial support to organizations that are actively engaged.

One project to focus more on is providing the support for Japanese descendants living in Japan to visit their home countries. Many Japanese descendants living in Japan do not actually know about their parents' countries. Alternatively, they may often only have negative perceptions based on biased information or past experiences. Just as JICA invites Japanese high school students of Japanese descent from Latin America to Japan, a good poten-

tial example that the Nippon Foundation and other organizations and groups could engage in would be programs to send young Japanese-Brazilians and Peruvians enrolled in high schools to Latin America so that they are able to "rediscover their roots." Given that each Nikkei community has an overseas migration museum, the students can be encouraged to learn about their parents' and grandparents' history in their country, and become more aware of their roots and their role in Japan through visits to such museums and interaction with Nikkei people.

There is also a need to coordinate support for advancing the education of relatives residing in Japan to high school and college. Various programs are already being implemented by local governments and non-profit organizations, but many of the students are in areas with unstable family situations, and there is the need to provide information and expert advice to their parents. Yet the reality is that simply providing multilingual pamphlets and guidebooks about the Japanese education system and higher education does not resolve the issue at hand. In addition, when students have to return to their home countries due to circumstances with their parents or under unavoidable reasons, complicated situations (such as semilingualism, incomplete educational standards not conducive to acquiring skills, or developing a sense of inferiority) that have been raised several times at this study group continue to remain in their home countries. Consideration of support for Nikkei children in situations like these will need to be ongoing in cooperation with Nikkei organizations.

Retirement and care for Nikkei in Japan is another future issue that also needs to be considered. Workers who came to Japan in the 1990s are now in their mid to late 50s. In Japan, seminars and workshops on "pension" and "nursing care (preventive)" have already been held and there is a growing level of interest.

## 2. Proposal for collaboration with Latin American and overseas Nikkei communities

While issues such as "lack of interest by younger people, lack of funds, and inability to pass on Japanese culture and Japanese language" are often cited by Nikkei organizations in various regions, the exec-

utives of Nikkei organizations first need to address the actual situation and management circumstances, and consider the possibility of collaboration with other organizations and institutions throughout the

local community. Non-Nikkei people have been playing a prominent role in the Nikkei community in recent years, and it is important to make greater use of these talented individuals, which will help to revitalize the Nikkei community.

It is also important to strengthen networks with former JICA trainees and Nikkei and non-Nikkei people who have studied abroad (e.g., under the Nippon Foundation Nikkei Scholarship Program or government-sponsored scholarship programs). The significance of the ideas of "Nikkei only and exclusively Nikkei" will gradually wane, and we need to come up with ways to facilitate greater participation by not only Nikkei communities in the major countries of Brazil, Peru, Mexico, and Argentina, but also smaller Nikkei communities, while also taking care that events and projects do not become exclusive.

For example, Cuba is a small Nikkei community and a country where it is very difficult to travel abroad, but the number of participants in JICA's Nikkei community training programs is on the rise. A mechanism could be devised to allow several members at a time to meet in Mexico and neighboring countries, and to invite young leaders, etc. from other South American countries, or to engage in exchange with Nikkei from the neighboring country of the Dominican Republic (Caribbean Sea).

Furthermore, COPANI (Pan American Nikkei Convention) is held every other year, and there is also the potential of drawing increased participation in the convention by young people and members of the next generation, as well as having artists and popular leaders from Japan take part in youth projects.

Future collaboration with Latin American and Nikkei communities will require the support of Nikkei projects or local groups (such as non profits, clubs, and activities) in which Nikkei are involved, especially those that address the needs of the local community. Yet complementary support, rather than initiatives such as one-way funding, is considered better. "True collaboration" is where projects are carried out with as much collaboration as possible, and not simply where Japan provides all the funding for any project, or where Japan takes the initiative and planning of projects. Occasionally there will be proposals from the Nikkei community, but funds should also be sought from Nikkei organizations whenever possible, as part of efforts to

make it a practice of bearing the workload. Funds have been provided entirely by the Japanese side for many of JICA projects in the past, but it will be important to share the roles and costs going forward and to ensure that projects are implemented on an equal footing—accountability and financial reporting after projects will also be essential.

An approach from a completely different perspective may require collaboration not only with existing Nikkei organizations, but also occasionally with individual Nikkei and voluntary organizations that have an influential position throughout local communities and industries. Nikkei who are reasonably successful and trusted are members of their local industry associations (such as bar associations, accountant committees, chambers of commerce, public organizations), and are not usually members of existing Nikkei organizations. Likewise, the same is true for those active in local politics. Unlike in Japan, they are not only elected politicians, but also hold key positions (including directors general, bureau chiefs and their assistants, and professional advisors appointed by the heads of those municipalities or states, given that they are actually political positions) in their local governments (such as municipalities and prefectures/states), and this needs to be better understood. Knowing more about businesses, professions, and members of such political circles may make it easier to inspire collaboration between all businesses. Expanding the network of artists and journalists in the arts and other fields is also a necessary form of connection behind cultural exchange projects with Japan. Embassies, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, JICA and others are also trying to expand their connections through various projects, but this is limited somewhat due to the frequent personnel changes. Thus interaction and building up a relationship of trust with local staff and others at such institutions forms a major source of information.

Japanese ODAs and other projects have chiefly taken a request-based approach until now, but moving forward, companies and organizations will be required to utilize various networks in order to visit local sites for determining what requirements they have and what types of projects they are able to participate in. Rather than dispatching personnel only after a project has been finalized, it is necessary to send personnel with the goal of assessing

requirements, conducting interviews, and examining potential collaborative projects with existing networks and other means. Instead of waiting, an approach is needed to take the initiative and visit local sites directly. Japan's weakness is its lack of speed due to studies that take too long, coupled with excessive failure prevention measures—yet the risk of failure needs to be viewed as an inevitable part of doing business with foreign countries, and preparations need to be in place for flexible measures designed to overcome any hurdles along the way. Without these, many projects will end up being abandoned before any sense of "collaboration" can be explored.

The UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

are quite well known in Japan but only have a low level of recognition throughout Latin America, and politicians are barely interested due to the severity of domestic issues that are present. Thus, even if Nikkei understand these factors, they need to take into account the circumstances and background of local communities in carrying out any project, and they must also align themselves with specific cultural and policy differences.

Nikkei also recognize the difficulties of working with Japan, and Japan needs to learn more from Nikkei than ever before, owing to their ability to operate with complex cross-cultural aspects. A high level of coordination and energy will be required on both sides.



# Chapter 2-2 : Proposals from Study Group Members

The Nippon Foundation invited the six of us to take part in the Project to Examine the Possibility of Working with the Next Generation of Nikkei, with the aim of exploring, from each of our perspectives, how the next generation of Nikkei and their communities can work together to build a mutually beneficial relationship with Japan. It must be noted that we are in no position to be leaders or decision makers amongst the Nikkei community. Yet we have raised the challenges that our societies are currently facing and are working to resolve based on our perspective as "ordinary" Nikkei and Japanese, and have proposed how we might be able to find more efficient and organic solutions by working together. The details of those proposals are outlined in Chapter II of this report. As a result of working together as members of the study group and learning about our re-

spective societies, we realized in this chapter that the challenges faced by Nikkei around the world are not divided by region, but are rather common issues faced by each society. The study group agreed that identifying challenges and trying to resolve them on a by-region basis lacks efficiency, and that the process would be smoother finding common aspects amongst those challenges, then working together with experts on each issue to examine solutions, regardless of the region. In this sense, we believe there is a need for cooperation amongst Nikkei communities located around the world. Here, we present the various challenges that the Nikkei community is currently facing when viewed from our perspectives, and provide a range of suggestions as to the type of cooperation that can bring us closer to resolving these challenges.

## 1. Cooperation with Japanese Society

As outlined in Chapter 1, Nikkei have played a key role in Japanese societies throughout history. Specifically, Japanese immigrants in the Americas organized LARA supplies to be sent to Japan after the war because of the shortage of materials in the country at the time. Furthermore, in the 1990s, Nikkei mainly from Latin American countries migrated to Japan to make up for labor shortages there, and played a key role in building the foundation of the Japanese economy. Despite national policy agendas, Nikkei have historically supported Japan by offering solutions to the problems the country faced.

Among the many challenges that Japan faces today, quite often young people find it difficult to live their lives due to the sense of stagnation running throughout Japanese society. While there are various factors that may be contributing to this—economic difficulties and social values unique to Japan wherein modesty is considered a virtue—it is also largely due to social intolerance stemming from a lack of diversity. We believe that the experiences of Nikkei in their respective adopted communities (hereafter referred to as "host communities"), where economic difficulties and long-established bloodlines have left them isolated, may provide an insight into solutions to the sense of stagnation and social

isolation faced by Japanese youth today.

Nikkei who have adapted to their host communities while maintaining their own identity, learned the local language, and studied the culture and customs, believe that they are able to share their diverse approach to perception with Japanese youth while respecting Japanese values and culture, as their very existence is built on the concept of diversity. Some third- and fourth-generation Nikkei did not take up Japanese as a language, and are thus unable to speak it. Yet the education they received in their home was infused with Japanese values, and this has created a sense of social credibility dubbed the "Nikkei brand" in each host community. This is the best proof that Japanese values and culture are being passed down within Nikkei communities, and it is the greatest asset that the Issei and Nisei have left behind for their children, regardless of the hardships they faced in their host communities.

Given their diverse backgrounds, Nikkei naturally often experience crises of identity in their host communities. Yet it is possible to maintain both cultures and build cultural identities as a Nikkei, and there are indeed many cases where this is visible. There are also examples of people with a diverse kaleidoscope of culture not limited just to ethnicity,

who have built up a third new culture that is neither Japanese nor that of the host country, despite being of Japanese descent, and have developed a cultural identity that they are comfortable with. We believe that the experience of Nikkei with roots in Japan in developing their own cultural identity may help Japanese youth to lead more satisfying lives. We view collaboration between Nikkei and Japanese youth as an effective means of achieving this.

Japan is a country that has historically embraced diverse cultures and enriched its own culture. Yet that scope of diversity is not as evident these days, and furthermore, the term diversity has taken on a life of its own, becoming synonymous with the protection of minority rights. In reality, each and every Japanese person needs to respect diversity—without that, it will be difficult for Japan to grow going forward and develop a country that is easy to live in. To this end, we thought that more Japanese people should be aware that their fellow countrymen traveled abroad with high aspirations at the end of the 19th century—those proud of their Japanese heritage despite going through so many hardships and difficulties, who earned the trust of their respective

host communities, making their presence known in those communities, and taking on roles as members of their host communities. We believe that this could form a clue for addressing the sense of stagnation and difficulties that Japanese people are facing today throughout their lives. We also think that this type of collaboration would be beneficial for Nikkei. This is because there are plenty of Nikkei who feel that they want to assist Japan, a country that forms one of their roots. In light of this, we deemed that it would also be advantageous to map out in detail what aspects of social issues that are present in Japan Nikkei think will be useful. An example that illustrates this is creating a roadmap akin to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that set out global problems. By clarifying and sharing details of these issues and the goals of Japanese society, Nikkei can remind themselves that their own position, which differs from that of the majority, is extremely valuable for addressing social issues. Mapping out these challenges helps to clarify them, makes it easier to work on them, and helps to identify how they can be mutually beneficial.

## 2. Collaboration for Children Living in Japan with Roots Overseas

The actual circumstances of people of Japanese descent living in Japan are not well understood. Even the term "Zainichi Nikkei" itself is ambiguous. Some people build their own identity as Nikkei through their involvement with Japan. This section will therefore focus on younger generations living in Japan who have connections overseas, particularly on the next generation with roots in Latin America and Southeast Asia that many Nikkei call home.

Beginning with the "Office for the Coordination of Policies on Foreign Residents" established in the Cabinet Office in 2009, various policies have been formulated to view foreign residents of Japanese descent as "foreigners who live in Japan," and efforts have been made to make it easier for them to settle in Japan. Among the young second generation, there are some who have attained college education, secured jobs, and are living a different lifestyle compared to their parents' generation, who were engaged in factory labor and other forms of work. Examples of people like these have been taken up as role models, and information has been disseminated through various media outlets. Yet

the number of such cases is small, and they are still often viewed as a small minority of youth who got "lucky." With this in mind, the program cannot be viewed as having directly motivated young people who have roots abroad.

Young people with connections overseas are not only in an environment conducive to building a global mindset, but are also human resources that can play an active role throughout Japanese society and in the international community. Growing up in Japan, these people feel a sense of affinity with Japan, even when they start playing an active role on the international stage. We thus need to view these young people as a key target for developing human resources with global potential, rather than as a "burden" or "people needing support" in the education sector. We would like to explore three areas that we believe are necessary for cultivating them as human resources capable of playing an active role in both Japanese and international society.

The first step is to gain a better understanding of their actual circumstances. We need to examine their requirements and what self-fulfillment they

are expecting. While prior surveys have focused on the schools they attend and their teachers, there have been few large-scale surveys of the students themselves, or their parents. There are also no accurate figures available on how many of these young people seek college level education, and the ratio of those who actually go on to do so.

The second step needs to focus on exploring how well their requirements are being accommodated at present. One of the challenges faced by people with connections overseas living in Japan is the poor dissemination of information. Regardless of the fact that efforts are being made to address a range of challenges, information fails to reach the target population in an appropriate manner. The result of this is that a portion of youth fail to achieve self-fulfillment, do not receive appropriate support, or simply give up on their education.

Finally, a network of young people connected to the Nikkei community, who have graduated or completed higher education in Japan and are active in Japanese society, needs to be identified and developed. It is assumed that young people with connections overseas often spend their adult lives on a constant search for their own identity. Thus learning about the existence of a community that is neither in Japan nor their parents' home country allows them to expand their network of like-minded people in similar circumstances. This closes the distance between Japan and their parents' home country, and enables them to not only act as a bridge, but also take pride in their bilateral (or multilateral) identity as they hopefully flourish into human resources capable of playing an active role on the global stage. We see such a potential role for the Nikkei community.

In our studies as outlined and discussed in the first and second points, the support of not only the Japanese government, including ministries and agencies, but also consulates in target countries, independent administrative agencies, and researchers will be essential. While the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and other ministries and agencies have conducted studies on children with overseas roots, there is also a need for research that covers those who are "not immediately visible" because they are rarely venture beyond their own families or out of Japanese society. Such research would require the cooperation

of local universities, learning support centers and foreign schools. To conduct such research, involving Nikkei who will lead the next generation as part of the approach for the research and for creating future networks would be ideal.

The results of the research would be made widely available to the public so that their requirements and current circumstances are better understood by the communities they live in and by Japanese society as a whole. This will provide an opportunity to think about the development of new indicators for educating the next generation of young people and develop initiatives that will lead to suggestions for other minority groups.

With this research, the aim is to develop a virtual network incorporating the next generation that will lead to a new form of education and Nikkei, linking up the young generation already active in the network with the next generation who are still in the process of receiving education, making it easier to seek advice related to career paths and other options from familiar role models. We anticipate that the expansion of such a network will lead to the development of a virtual community, which will gradually shift into an educational community that fosters and guides the next generation.

We believe that by developing a community, we can recreate the Nikkei communities that our forebears once built up in Hawaii, the Americas, and Southeast Asia in a way that is relevant to today's modern age, that empowers each other, and fosters strong relationships with Japan in various fields. We also believe that by using virtual sites, activities can be conducted with an eye on the potential to connect not only with people of Japanese descent living in Japan, but also with people of Japanese descent living abroad.

Finally, while we believe that developing such a community requires activities that are in line with the current times, we also consider it essential to pass on the history and cultural identity of Nikkei. It is vital for the community to be able to continue to carry on the Nikkei culture, where both the essential and timeless aspects of the culture are able to coexist, and where the culture can be rebuilt and advanced by new members of the community.

### 3. Collaboration to Create a Better Work Environment

People of the Japanese diaspora, known as Nikkei, or people who are Japanese but have a second culture by choice, are a form of "third culture." This term refers to the amalgamation of two cultures (one from birth and the other from their environment) into a third culture that combines elements of both. While "Third Culture Kids" (TCKs) traditionally refers to the children of expat parents, there are many adults who share similar experiences and perspectives as TCKs.

Fourth-generation Nikkei, such as the Nikkei among us, do not fall under the traditional definition of TCK. Yet we have also found ourselves asking many of the same identity questions that TCKs tend to question. Where exactly is our home? We are 100% residents of the country we live in, and also completely Japanese. This aligns with our current view of culture, where culture is something we are able to choose at will. In a similar vein, those who were born in Japan and feel that they do not fit in with their own culture are encouraged to travel abroad to discover a culture that resonates with their own views.

We also believe this applies to business culture. It is sometimes said that the language of Silicon Valley (and other high-tech industries) is not actually English, but English as a second language. The demographics of the San Francisco Bay Area reveal a large number of immigrants from almost every country in the world. Silicon Valley companies have developed policies that are not necessarily American, but are well suited to motivating workers in a multicultural environment.

For example, a typical manager in Silicon Valley is supposed to set goals for his or her team and ensure that work aligns with the company's overall goals. Silicon Valley's business culture focuses on the idea of impact, and guaranteeing that work being done is important actually matters more than the amount of time spent working on it. Compensation is linked to how much impact a worker has on the company's success. Communication is very direct—a necessary factor within a multicultural environment. Managers have the responsibility of explaining goals to their subordinates, and subordinates have the responsibility of questioning their managers if they do not understand the goals.

Circumstances at Japanese companies differ sig-

nificantly, when taking into account the perspective of our members working in Japan. While this might be a generalization that does not necessarily apply in all cases, Japanese companies seem to place a greater importance on "appearing" to work hard rather than job performance. Compensation is based on seniority, not performance, and communication is indirect and requires understanding the context of what is being said, even if the gist is not stated explicitly. Managers are not obligated to explain goals to their subordinates, and there is a tendency for subordinates to simply accept what their managers tell them, even if they do not understand the goals.

One of our members was the first English-speaking manager at a top-tier Japanese startup. Rather than trying to be "more Japanese," the member has tried to bring onboard their experience from Silicon Valley into their organizational culture. This caused a certain level of friction, but one of the important things about working in a startup is overcoming early difficulties and ensuring that the company is in a stronger position afterwards than when it was founded. In essence, that member sought to make the organization a "third culture company."

When the member joined the company, only 10% of the engineers were non-Japanese, and the language used throughout the office was Japanese. Today, more than 40% of engineers are non-Japanese—many do not speak Japanese at all. The engineering team converses in English, and the Vice President of Engineering is a Spanish person hired by that member.

This process would not have been possible without the Japanese who understood what that member was working on and trying to achieve by leading the organization. There were also many foreign workers who supported that member in the same way. Understanding both aspects of business culture made it possible to bring about these changes in the organization. Little by little, all the Japanese working there transformed to acquire a third culture.

After that member left the start-up, they started working for an American multinational company in Tokyo. Its offices have many Nikkei working there, particularly Japanese Americans. Those workers made the decision to work in Japan in an attempt to

rediscover their own (Japanese) culture.

Just as with those Nikkei who came to Japan to rediscover their own culture, many other Nikkei working for Japanese companies have the potential to transform their inner culture. When a Japanese company aims to become a third culture company, Nikkei as well as TCKs, are vital human resources to achieve this transition. Our member, through their experience with Japanese start-ups, is convinced

that this is the best way to transform the industry—something that we all agree with. That member believes that this is also reflected in the success of Nikkei in other countries and how they contributed to change within their own organizations. In light of this, we encourage those coming to Japan from overseas in the future to be more like a "Nikkei" who has a third culture, rather than trying to blend in with Japanese people.

#### 4. Cooperation between Japan and Nikkei Abroad

Over the years, Japan has contributed significantly to the development of Nikkei communities overseas. Many of their children have benefited from their understanding of Japanese culture and have gone on to become unique individuals in their countries of residence. More recently, however, interest in Japanese heritage and Japanese culture is waning amongst young fourth- and fifth-generation Nikkei. On the one hand, this is a sign that they have become firmly entrenched as ordinary residents of their country of residence—on the other hand, it can also lead to the loss of their cultural identity as Japanese and Nikkei. The identity that each individual develops is a matter of their own free will, but it would be unfortunate if they lost that identity due to a lack of opportunities to connect with Japanese culture and Japan.

Thus we believe it is important to create opportunities to learn about Japanese culture and the history behind the Nikkei. Some of our members belong to organizations that promote Japanese culture on a large scale in their countries of residence. Such culture and information dissemination may include the following: 1) Participate in social service activities, make donations, and conduct public awareness activities in the event of a disaster in Japan. Partnerships with reliable Japanese organizations can ensure that credible information is provided and that when donations are collected, they will be delivered properly to the affected areas and survivors. 2) Organize academic and cultural exchange programs online or on-site. One of our members is the president of the only Nikkei university in the world. This type of academic and cultural exchange links up young people from the countries where our members reside and in Japan, and through cross-cultural exchange, they are able to expand their knowledge of not only the culture of both countries but also

their respective circumstances and social issues, and become good partners in the future, with which we have already implemented initiatives that will hopefully lead to future collaboration. We believe that if the intermediary for exchange—the basis for such cooperation—is facilitated through Nikkei like ourselves, we will be able to penetrate their respective societies more smoothly. 3) Hold annual Japanese events, cultural activities, and sports activities in areas where Nikkei reside. In order to continue holding such events, we need support from the Japanese side and believe that cultural exchanges can be implemented not only among schools, but also among local governments and a diverse range of organizations. In many countries, these events are preferred and actively engaged in by the younger generation of the so-called non-traditional Nikkei. We believe that this is an ideal opportunity to promote Japanese culture, and we are seeking further cooperation such that we are able to disseminate the culture. (4) Create learning opportunities about the heritage of Nikkei in diverse countries and the cultures they have established. In both Japan and adopted countries, there is only a shallow understanding of the history behind Nikkei. We hope that what our predecessors developed will be passed on, not only to young Nikkei but also to a diverse group of people, and that it will be viewed as a suggestion for solving the various challenges present throughout the world today. 5) Create opportunities to link up active Nikkei youth in diverse countries of residence. We believe that Nikkei youth living in various countries can work with each other to create events and social initiatives that will have a greater impact. We will continue to communicate the importance of connecting with each other using online and other tools used for this type of collaboration.



## 5. Potential as a Global Human Resource not limited to "Nikkei"

One of our members came to Japan as a child following the migrant worker boom under the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act amended in 1990. They were educated in Japan, then headed to their country of residence, graduated from college, and built up a wealth of global experience since then. They say that their Japanese language skills have improved and their sense of mutual understanding between their country of residence and Japan has sharpened immensely through these experiences. These experiences, and the skills they acquired along the way, resulted in them working in a position as a "Communication Coordinators (CC)" for many years. That member, as well as the rest of us, consider it a problem that not many human resources have been trained working in positions like CCs in our countries of residence and elsewhere. CCs do not just work in interpretation, but are involved in the complex process of converting one language to another with an understanding of the countries, cultures, or background circumstances of related to both. Such work must be done instantaneously in the case of simultaneous interpretation, or meticulously during meetings, and involves much effort. Even for Nikkei with a certain understanding of Japan and their country of residence, this can be a difficult task without proper training and guidance. Yet Nikkei have great potential for fulfilling the role of CCs. And we believe that the capabilities of CCs are essential for "Nikkei and Japanese to work together and contribute to society," which is the subject that this study group is focusing on.

While various processes must be followed to partner up for social contribution projects, we have focused on the following key points from the perspective of a "CC." (1) Collaboration requires trust and personal connections. Connections with key people in Nikkei and local communities will enhance the potential for collaboration. This requires cooperation with more advanced and expert groups in business, cultural exchange and international cooperation projects. (2) Communication: The prerequisite is the ability to exchange opinions in an appropriate manner. Although the number of Japanese who speak English has increased in recent years, in the overwhelming majority of cases they find it more comfortable and easier to open

up when speaking in Japanese. Therefore, it is important to speak confidently in one's own language, while accurately conveying one's own opinions to the other person, no matter what style of communication is used. 3) Mutual understanding: Plans often fail, no matter how great they are, without a proper understanding of the cultures of both countries. To this end, we believe the following points should be kept in mind:

- The need for a deep understanding of the realities and cultural customs of the project area
- The realities and norms for both parties do not apply.
- The importance of communicating while reading the atmosphere on both sides
- The importance of "phrasing" and "delivery" in tense situations

In order for Nikkei to become potential targets for collaboration, Nikkei themselves need to learn more about Japan and be able to take advantage of the connections they have. Nikkei networks must become more accessible so that Japanese people can engage even more with Latin America. We believe it is important to know everything about one another and achieve something together.

The next generation needs to be trained with the capabilities of a certain level of CC—there are unfortunately few schools in Latin America where students can study interpretation and translation between "Japanese/Spanish or Portuguese." Therefore, we believe that if we are able to gather several young people, mainly children of former migrant workers, who are fluent in both languages, and train them with a focus on practical learning, akin to the "Peace Boat style CC training program," we will have a better chance of fostering a new generation.

As one of our members' country of residence is Peru, we propose organizing a 5-month CC training program for 2-6 members based in Peru. Specifically, the program will provide two months of special CC training at APJ facilities in partnership with the Peruvian Japanese Association (APJ), the Japan Foundation, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA Peru Office), the Nippon Foundation, the Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad, and the Nippon Foundation Nikkei Scholarship (NFSA), among others. After that, they will take part in vol-



unteer CC work on the Peace Boat (PB). An example itinerary is the 118th PB cruise departing in August, or the 119th PB cruise departing in December. During the two months at APJ, simulated training will be provided for CC tasks, including consecutive and simultaneous interpretation at least once a week. To facilitate this, we will invite speakers and observers from the aforementioned organizations and institutions, and ask them to take on the role of CCs with the target audience during a 20-minute presentation. In addition to face-to-face training, there is naturally the option of using virtual training via Internet conferencing. A review meeting will always be held after each training session to exchange opinions on making changes and improvements. In this way, we will be able to identify each other's areas of difficulties and weaknesses, and make improvements if we put in the required effort.

The PB cruise is a great opportunity spending three months cruising the globe while facing a wide range of actual circumstances current occurring around the world—history, gender, social and environmental issues, sustainability, NGO/NPO activ-

ities, social inclusion, quality of life improvement, conflict issues, and peace studies in each country. After accomplishing this 5-month CC training program, we will focus on introducing them to opportunities within the CC sector in Peru. When working with Peru on collaborative projects, there are some difficulties that are unique to Peru. To this end, we are convinced that CCs can serve as another buffer for communication and be more involved in strengthening relations between the two countries.

We believe that the biggest challenge that must be overcome in order to implement this CC training project will be to find young people with the right qualities. Aside from language skills, CCs require skills such as "comprehension, expression, communication, judgment, information gathering, research, reading comprehension, and self-management," and the position is suitable for people with "curious and studious" personalities. We hope that there will be some capable of honing their skills through the project and become engaged in "collaboration between Nikkei and Japanese" as a CC.

## 6. For the Next Generation

We are confident that we are leading an ambitious mission: understand the new generation and their aspirations. This will by no means be an easy task, but we understand that there are two aspects of people that should be focused on. The first is those with blood ties; the second is those with cultural ties. Rather than isolating the people with a connection to Japan away from these two aspects, we instead need to consider ways of moving forward together. When we consider collaboration with Japan, we believe that in the coming years, we must create more opportunities for these people to take part in Nikkei communities and organizations, as they will play a key role in the Japanese enthusiast communities. They should also focus on how many Nikkei and non-Nikkei youth are involved in their Nikkei organizations and are on the board of directors.

For the 63rd Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad in 2023, the term "Nikkei community" was written in katakana to convey the inclusivity of not only Nikkei who are immigrants from Japan and their descendants, but also those who are interested in Japanese culture and values and who play an

active role in Nikkei community activities, allowing non-Nikkei people to participate in the convention. We believe that going forward, the number of Nikkei and non-Nikkei youth attending such Nikkei events should be ascertained in detail.

We also need to prepare for evolution and rethink the modalities of our organization and events so that we can trigger the interest of people. In this regard, we suggest three proposals: "acquisition," "motivation," and "retention" of the next generation. We believe that we need to continue promoting youth exchanges in Latin American countries, invite Japanese youth to participate, and work to increase the number of participants other than Nikkei. Given that today's social media (TikTok, etc.) influencers are some of the biggest trendsetters right now, a campaign that promotes the value of Japanese and Nikkei culture and shows how involved these new "heroes" are in tangible activities might be able to motivate Generation Z.

In 2025, an animated feature film, "The Japanese," based on a book by a Brazilian of Japanese descent, is scheduled to be released. Social media (TikTok, etc.) influencers should be invited to join the cam-

campaign in line with the release to explore opportunities for increasing visibility. It will also be necessary to create a physical or virtual environment wherein young people can take part on a long-term basis.

## Conclusion

As outlined in the introduction, as members of this study group, we understand that the challenges faced by Nikkei communities vary from region to region, but there are many common aspects. Rather than looking at the challenges faced by Nikkei in each country of residence, we feel that it is necessary to take an overview of Nikkei communities as a whole, and identify ways to resolve these challenges for Nikkei communities as a whole. Just as Generation Z youth are interconnected globally through a single smartphone, we hope to be connected through aspects common to Japan, and to roll out solution-oriented initiatives that are able to address the diverse range of challenges present around the world in the fields in which we are active.

Given the differences in the environments in which the members of this study group operate, it was difficult to arrive at a specific proposal for collaboration that could be implemented immediately. However, we realized again that the important factor that makes up unique "Nikkei" communities is the willingness of people of different genders, nationalities, and interests to sincerely discuss the future of unique new "Nikkei communities" from the common ground of having a connection to Japan, to pool their collective wisdom from their respective standpoints, and to try to build something new. We intend to work with a wide variety of people and organizations to actually make this proposal a reality. Anyone reading through this report who develops an interest in working with us is welcome to get in contact with us.

Finally, we would like to thank all the experts in their respective fields who took the time out of

We believe that a hybrid model using new technical resources (such as e-gaming and discord) will also boost engagement with the next generation of youth in face-to-face activities and events.

their busy schedules to share their wisdom with us while members of the study group reported on their findings. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation to Mr. Masato Seko, Director of the Nippon Foundation, Ms. Mizuki Nakagawa, Ms. Yuko Tani, and Ms. Momo Yoshida, who established this study group. There are very few opportunities to discuss topics related to Nikkei on such a grand scale, and extend our appreciation for providing such a forum. I would also like to thank Ms. Hiromi Hijikata, Secretary General of the Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad, Ms. Fumiko Nakai, General Manager, and Ms. Nagisa Sato, who, despite time differences, have always been so efficient in setting up online meetings, completing administrative tasks, and coordinating the complex efforts of the Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad. We are also indebted to our facilitator, Dr. Alberto Matsumoto, who has accurately summarized the most important and diverse points of view for this project, ensuring that our voices were easy to understand.

The study group reaffirmed that Nikkei are not a people of a long distant past, but rather a model for global human resources who can play an active role in Japan and their countries of residence in the modern era. The members would like to devote ourselves to passing on the legacy left by our first and second generation forebears to future generations of all backgrounds.

Members of the Project to Study Possibilities for Collaboration with the Next Generation of Nikkei

## [Proposal]

### Proposal to Japanese Society for Collaboration

- 1 Creation of opportunities to learn about the history and current circumstances involving Nikkei.
- 2 Organization of events and training programs to recognize Nikkei as people with a good un-

derstanding of Japan.

- 3 Creating a roadmap for solving contemporary issues in Japanese society with Nikkei

### Proposals for Nikkei in Japan

- 1 Visualization of children's education through a variety of studies.

- 2 An initiative to reform the Japanese business world as a bearer of the third culture.

#### **Proposals for Nikkei abroad**

- 1 Building partnerships with various Japanese organizations to become bearers of Japanese culture in their countries of residence.
- 2 Establishment of a communication coordinator training program.

#### **Proposals for the next generation**

- 1 Promoting acceptance of new "Nikkei" as bearers of Japanese culture, rather than isolating Nikkei and non-Nikkei.
- 2 Identifying trends and requirements of the new generation, and deliver the Nikkei legacy in a way that is accessible.

# Chapter 3 : Project to Study Possibilities for Collaboration with the Next Generation of Nikkei

## 1 Implementation System

Organizer: The Nippon Foundation

Secretariat: Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad

## 2 Record of Implementation of the Project

\* Honorifics omitted, observers listed in alphabetical order

Facilitator: Alberto Matsumoto



Nisei of Japanese descent from Argentina

Came to Japan as a government-financed international student, where he received a master's degree in law. Established a translation company specializing in public relations and legal work (1997).

## First Study Session: April 25, 2023 (Tue)

Kitsutani Kian Hernan Armando



Third-generation Peruvian-Japanese.

Received his compulsory education in Japan from 1988 to 1994. After graduating from the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the National University of San Marcos in 2001, he engaged in prefectural-financed studies at the

Veterinary Hospital affiliated with the Department of Veterinary Medicine in the Faculty of Agriculture of Yamaguchi University. In 2004, he obtained a license as an acupuncturist from an acupuncture & moxibustion therapy college and a master's degree from the Graduate University Of Japan Traditional Medicine And Science under the Nippon Foundation Scholarship Program. Trained at the Department of Palliative Medicine in Acupuncture at the National Cancer Center Hospital for two years from 2008. Since 2010, he has been involved in international cooperation projects with the non-profit Arco Iris and working as an acupuncturist at the Emanuel Clinic in Peru, in addition to being a free interpreter and translator of Spanish-Japanese and Japanese-Spanish since he was 19 years old.

Lecturer of social economics and laws in Latin America at the Faculty of Law at Dokkyo University, lecturer of "Central and South American Society 1&2" (Summer and Winter Intensive Courses) at the Department of Spanish Studies of Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, broadcast interpreter at NHK-TVE, columnist for Discover Nikkei-JANM, and court interpreter in district courts in Yokohama and Tokyo.

Lecturer for JICA Central and South American trainees and training before JICA Overseas Cooperation Volunteers are dispatched to Central and South America.

Received the "JICA President Award" in October 2017, and the "Foreign Minister's Commendation" in August 2022.

Observers:

Yuko Anda

(chef, owner of Anda Gyoza)

Ken Kondo

(Chief Officer, South America Division, Latin American and Caribbean Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan / Division for Collaboration with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and Descendants ("Nikkei") in Latin America)

Satomi Nakashima

(South America Division, Latin American and Caribbean Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan / Division for Collaboration with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and Descendants ("Nikkei") in Latin America)

Norihisa Ohashi

(Representative of non-profit Alco Iris)

Narumi Ogusuku Higa

(JICA Peru Office)

Katsuyuki Tanaka

(Chairman, The Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad)

Akira Uchimura

(1st year student, Nikkei Scholarship Program, Nitetsu Mining)



## Summary

Mr. Kitsutani is a first-year student of the Nippon Foundation Nikkei Scholarship Program, and learned the art of acupuncture and moxibustion through his study in Japan. In his presentation, Mr. Kitsutani stated that in addition to acquiring specialized knowledge and skills, networking with international students from other programs, improving communication skills, and learning about cultures and customs would help him serve as a bridge between Japan and his home country.

Harnessing JICA's grassroots projects together with Japanese non-profit organizations and specialists, he provided economic support for small farmers and facilitated the uptake of agroforestry production while focusing on environmental conservation. He also suggested that if local farmers were able to work with large Japanese organizations in Lima, they could provide a stable supply in urban areas and expand to overseas markets.

Mr. Kitsutani was also educated in Japan during his childhood, and while there were many Japanese descendants in Peru with similar backgrounds to his own, there were only limited opportunities available to them. He suggested the need for "Communication Coordinators (CC)" and their training for simultaneous interpretation and attending to dignitaries at conferences and lectures, such as academic meetings between Japan and Peru.

In addition to Nikkei, there is a growing number of non-Nikkei who are interested in Japanese food and culture, and in Peru, people are selling Japanese

foods and bonsai or are helping to promote Japanese culture such as origami, while running sushi restaurants.

Various attempts have been made toward networking amongst Nikkei, but there have been some issues, like the fact that things did not go smoothly even after establishing an organization, and he suggested that a type of "loose partnerships" between individuals, rather than between organizations, would be more sustainable.

## Comments from Observers

Mr. Ohashi commented that the project went smoothly, because of Mr. Kitsutani, a Nikkei who is well versed not only in the languages but also in both Japanese and local culture and customs.

Mr. Kondo and Ms. Nakashima of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explained about the newly established in 2023 "Division for Collaboration with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and Descendants ("Nikkei") in Latin America." The Ministry of Foreign Affairs considers the Nikkei community to be a major asset in diplomacy with Latin America, and is aiming to achieve a win-win relationship, rather than "support." In addition to the project to invite young Nikkei, the Ministry plans to promote networking among the Nikkei community in each country.

On the other hand, Mr. Uchimura commented that more than half of the board members of Nikkei organizations in Chile are non-Japanese and by making events open to anyone interested in Japan and Japanese culture, the number of people attending such events has increased annually, which likewise helped in the promotion of Japanese culture.

Ms. Ogusuku, JICA's representative in Lima, mentioned that JICA's Nikkei Training Program for Nikkei Communities and Nikkei Supporters Program has been made available to non-Japanese trainees, and it has become increasingly important to work not only with Nikkei, but also with those who are interested in Japanese culture and Japan, as well as those who have studied in Japan.



## 連携の課題と可能性について POSIBILIDADES DE COLABORACIÓN

- ❖ 日本財団日系スカラーとして
  - ・ Como becario de la Fundación Nippon
- ❖ 日本との国際協力事業
  - ・ A través de Proyectos internacionales con Japón
- ❖ 日本の企業との連携
  - ・ Cooperación con empresas japonesas
- ❖ 既存の日系人団体との連携
  - ・ A través de asociaciones nikkeis existentes
- ❖ 日系社会の医療関係との連携
  - ・ En áreas médicas de la colectividad nikkei

## 言葉を活かした日系人団体との連携 COLABORACIÓN CON ASOCIACIONES NIKKEIS A TRAVÉS DEL LENGUAJE

- ❖ 言葉や文化を活かして日本と日系人社会の架け橋になれる人を育てる必要がある。
  - ・ Necesidad de formar personas que dominen el idioma y las costumbres para servir como puente entre Japón y sus comunidades Nikkeis.
- ❖ ペルーではコミュニケーション・コーディネーター (CC) が出る人が年々減っている。
  - ・ En Perú, la cantidad de personas que pueden actuar como coordinadores de comunicación (CC) están disminuyendo año a año.
- ❖ ペルー日系人協会を中心に日本語の通訳・翻訳 (CC) を育てる新たなプロジェクトが出来たら面白い (両言語が出来る人に限る)。
  - ・ Crear un nuevo proyecto para intérpretes y traductores (CC) con Asociación Nikkeis (Sólo para personas que dominen ambas lenguas).

## Second Study Session: May 24, 2023 (Wed)

Pinillos Matsuda Derek Kenji



Fourth-generation Peruvian-Japanese.

Came to Japan in 1998 and transferred to a public school in Osaka. Graduated from the School of Policy Studies of the School of Policy Studies at Kwansei Gakuin University in 2012 and completed a master's program in

education of the Graduate School of Human Sciences at Sophia University in 2014.

Currently a lecturer at the Global Initiative Center of Gunma University. Part-time lecturer at Ochanomizu University, Showa Women's University, and Meiji Gakuin University. Engaged in research on the education of Nikkei children in Japan and on the identity transformation of Peruvians of Japanese descent in the U.S. who experienced internment in the U.S. during World War II.

Observers:

**Jose Bravo Kohatsu** (President, Japan-Peru Association for Integration)

**Ken Kondo** (Chief Officer, South America Division, Latin American and Caribbean Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan / Division for Collaboration with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and Descendants ("Nikkei") in Latin America)

**Kyoko Nakagawa**

(Clinical psychologist, kaeruproject)

**Satomi Nakashima**

(South America Division, Latin American and Caribbean Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan / Division for Collaboration with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and Descendants ("Nikkei") in Latin America)

**Roxana Oshiro**

(President, Hyogo Latin Community)

**Kumiko Sakamoto**

(President, NPO Aidensha)

**Akio Takiguchi**

(Director, Planning and Migration Affairs Division, Latin America and the Caribbean Department, JICA)



## Summary

Mr. Matsuda, an 8th year student of the Nippon Foundation Nikkei Scholarship Program, is currently

a lecturer at Gunma University. He gave a presentation on the possibility of future collaboration based on his experience as a Nikkei living in Japan.

He came to Japan from Peru when he was 10 years old, and there were times when he felt lonely and lacked a sense of belonging. Through the "Nippon Foundation Nikkei Scholarship Program" and his research on identity at the university, he described the process of encountering a diverse range of other Nikkei and transforming his identity into that of a hybrid Nikkei. There were participants in the study group who had similar experiences with the transformation of their sense of belonging and identity.

He also felt Nikkei were a diverse and inclusive people who were trying to build a society in which everyone can play an active role, and who have a sound understanding of Japanese society. While respecting the values and cultural background of the past, he conveyed the importance of a forum to discuss the future of Japan, including internationalization and the inclusion of minorities, in addition to rebuilding of the Nikkei community, collaboration between Nikkei living in Japan and Japanese society, and Nikkei living in Japan and between generations.

#### Comments from Observers

The Nikkei organizations in Japan that Mr. Kohatsu and Ms. Oshiro represent are also working on identity as well as conveying the native language, and they also feel the importance of cultivating the next generation and collaboration between generations and Nikkei in Japan. Out of these, the education of children is still a major issue.

Ms. Nakagawa provides support for children coming to Brazil, but they have language skills and

identity issues that make it difficult for them to advance to college, and with the help of study group member Mr. Kurita, she is incorporating cultural activities.

Ms. Sakamoto hopes to establish a nationwide system in cooperation with the Brazilian Nikkei community to provide information and become role models for living in Japan, in addition to career education, including efforts to increase the presence of the Nikkei community in Japan and exchanges between international students and children.

Last year, JICA began a training program called Nikkei Supporter Program, an initiative to have Latin American Nikkei come to Japan and discover themselves while contributing to the communities and other activities. This training program has been highly praised, and JICA intends to continue considering providing support to Nikkei in Japan.

#### Comments from Study Group Members

Mr. Kurita commented on the importance of using social media to disseminate information, including support for Japanese language learning and publicizing best practices.

Ms. Hirano described her visit to a Brazilian school in Japan and her participation in a project of a non-profit organization that has adopted a mentoring system to connect foreign children living in Japan with Japanese people. She reaffirmed the importance of Japanese people living together with foreigners, outlined the need for Japanese people to be aware that Japanese society cannot function without foreigners, and communicated and proposed cooperation from the Japan side.

自分自身のアイデンティティの変容 TRANSFORMACIÓN DE MI PROPIA IDENTIDAD			
ペルー EN PERÚ	来日後 RECIENTE LLEGADO A JAPÓN	大学時代 EN LA UNIVERSIDAD	日系スカラー BECARIO DE LA NFS
日本人・アジア人 Japonés ó Asiático	外国人 Extranjero	コスモポリタン Cosmopolita	ハイブリディティ のある日系人 Nikkei

**本事業の意義**  
**La importancia del proyecto**

**日系人コミュニティの再構築**  
**"Re"construcción de la comunidad nikkei.**

これまでの価値観や文化的な背景を重んじつつ新しい取り組みに挑むことの重要性  
La importancia de asumir nuevas iniciativas respetando los valores y los contextos culturales existentes.

### Third Study Session: June 30, 2023 (Fri)

Michael Toshio Omoto



Fourth-generation American Japanese-American.

Born in Los Angeles and currently living in Japan.

After teaching English in Japan, moved to Silicon Valley to join a startup. Then worked for Mercari in Japan as the first English-speaking engineering manager. Currently also an engineering manager for a FAANG-level company and a technical consultant for Discover Nikkei, a Nippon Foundation grant. Past Vice President of the 20th COPANI Executive Committee and was involved in the COPANI event in San Francisco in September 2019.

#### Observers:

Yoko Nishimura

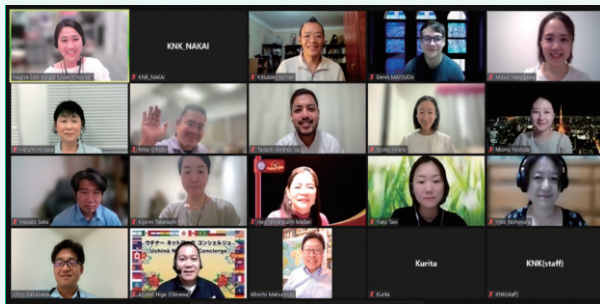
(Discover Nikkei Project Manager)

Andres Higa

(UNC Uchina Network Concierge in JICA Okinawa)

Tadashi Andres Isa

(Learning Support Section, Academic Affairs Division, Meio University)



#### Summary

Michael Omoto is a fourth-generation Japanese American who currently works for a foreign company in Japan while managing Discover Nikkei.

He described the importance of finding a specialty, not just a language, based on his experience working for a major company where he learned programming skills in addition to Japanese. He also presented the characteristics of Nikkei, such as their

global perspective and the possibility of generating a new sense of value that cannot be obtained by simply imitating Japan.

For the future of Discover Nikkei, he believes that it needs to be developed with ideas from Nikkei and people involved in the Nikkei community, and suggested expanding the volunteer pool and recruiting engineers and translators from around the world.

He also suggested that if a framework could be developed to better collaborate with companies and invite Nikkei proficient with technical skills from South America to take part in internships, it would be beneficial to both countries and lead to business opportunities. He stated that encouraging the participation of Japanese people with a global perspective, such as those who have worked or studied abroad at foreign-affiliated companies at the Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad, and increasing opportunities to interact with Nikkei, will lead to networking opportunities for the next generation.

#### Comments from Observers

Ms. Nishimura, who has long been involved in the operation of Discover Nikkei, also participated as an observer and reported that she and the volunteer staff are currently working to improve communication on the site, primarily by incorporating an automatic translation system to remove language barriers.

Mr. Higa and Mr. Isa, who established International Day of Nikkei, stressed the importance of including emigration and Nikkei in Japanese history textbooks, and suggested programs that would make it easier for young people to participate in the Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad.

Mr. Hijikata, Secretary General of the Convention of Nikkei and Japanese Abroad, commented that from the 63rd Convention, non-Nikkei will be able to participate, and that he would continue to be open to the location and content of the event, while keeping in mind the diversity and breadth of participants.

#### Comments from Study Group Members

Ms. Hirano gave an example of how JETRO is working with a venture capital firm run by Japanese entrepreneurs in Brazil to invite Japanese start-ups



to that country, share existing knowledge and networking, and provide them with support as mentors.

Mr. Matsuda also focused on the challenges in

identity formation for children of Nikkei and South Americans living in Japan, and the importance of creating opportunities for them to learn about their roots and Nikkei history.

**Myth & Reality**

Being a Nikkei person in a company will help you become an important bridge between Japanese folks and Global folks

There are plenty of multicultural Japanese people who don't fit into the traditional definition of Nikkei

Working with them is important, especially because they will have language or business skills you do not have

**Continue to develop Discover Nikkei Volunteer Network**

**Why?**

- Develop a central multilingual organization
- Encourage awareness and relationships between Nikkei organizations around the world

**How?**

- Convert Discover Nikkei into a true open source project
- Continue to recruit engineers and translators
- Continue to fund Discover Nikkei's in-house engineering backbone

#### Fourth Study Session: July 27, 2023 (Thur)

Ines Yamanouchi Mallari



Third-generation Nikkei born in Davao City, Philippines.

Completed a year of Japanese language classes at the Tokyo Tama Educational Center in 1991.

Graduated doctorate degree in Educational Administration at Ateneo de Davao University in the Philippines.

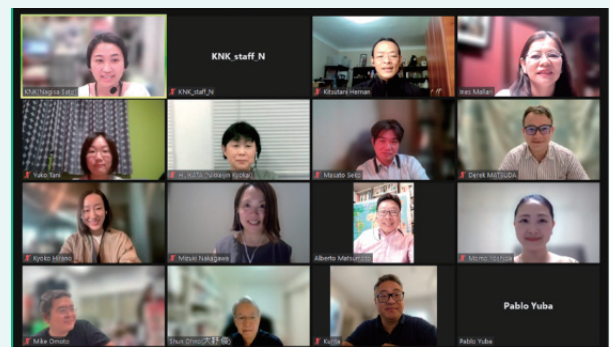
Currently serving as the President of Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai Rengokai, Inc., Chairperson of Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai in Davao City, President & School Directress of Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai International School, and the President & Administrator of Mindanao Kokusai Daigaku.

Awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon by the Japanese Government in 2021.

**Observer:**

**Shun Ono**

(Professor, Seisen University)



#### Summary

Dr. Ines is a third-generation Philippine Nikkeijin who currently serves as concurrent School President of Mindanao Kokusai Daigaku (MKD) and Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai International School (PNJKIS), President of Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai Rengokai, Inc., and Chairperson of Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai in Davao City.

Japanese immigration to the Philippines began about 120 years ago, and as an offshoot of the Pacific war, Nikkeijin were discriminated against and forced to hide their ties with Japan—even today there remains the issue of registered stateless second-generation people. The PNJK International School and MKD established by Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai place a premium on teaching Japanese language and culture, and contribute to the promotion of exchange between Japan and the Philippines. With the support from Davao-born Japanese, volunteer

groups and individuals, JICA, the Nippon Foundation, and private companies, the Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai is now able to contribute to the growth of the local community through the organization of sporting events, a resource center, and a medical clinic. She stated that various events are planned this year to commemorate the 120th anniversary of Japanese immigration, and she hopes to promote the relationship between Japan and the Philippines to a wide range of generations.

### Comments from Observers

Mr. Ono has been involved in research on Filipinos of Japanese descent and has seen firsthand the difficulties that they faced after the war—he shared the challenges and history of Nikkei with many people through books and other media. He noted that in recent years, there has been a movement among fourth- and fifth-generation Nikkei to establish ties with Japan, and he is keeping a close eye on this development. He also stated that his university is involved in activities sharing the historical experiences

of Filipino Nikkei with students, and that he hopes to continue to work with the Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai to serve as a bridge linking the two countries.

### Comments from Study Group Members

Mr. Omoto stated that he has a positive attitude toward turning weaknesses into strengths, and as a foreigner with a different cultural background, he can bring a richer perspective to Japanese society.

Ms. Hirano noted that young people are becoming less interested in history, and that there is a need for venues where they can experience it firsthand, and that conveying history is important for forming identities.

Mr. Matsuda also stated that passing along history leads to an increased sense of pride throughout the community and an affirmed sense of identity. As for methods of passing on history to future generations, Mr. Kisutani suggested the production of anime and Mr. Matsuda suggested actively using museums.



## Fifth Study Group: August 29, 2023 (Tue)

Claudio Hajime Kurita



Fourth-generation Brazilian-Japanese.

Currently Director of Operations, Events and Facilities at Japan House São Paulo. Graduated in Publicity and Propaganda, and previously worked in the City Hall of São Paulo in the area of Tourism and events. Participated in the Young Leaders Program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo. As a volunteer, currently is

Director of the Bunkyo Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Japonesa e de Assistência Social, President of the Administration Committee of the Japanese Pavilion in Ibirapuera, Vice President of the Pan-American Nikkei Association of Brazil, and Director of the Brazilian Association of Gaimusho Kenshusei Scholarship Ex-Scholarship Holders.

### Observers:

**Tamiko Hosokawa**

(Executive Director, Centro de Estudos Nipo Brasileiros)



**Yayoi Kimura**

(Planning and Migration Affairs Division, Latin America and the Caribbean Department, JICA)

**Ken Kondo**

(Chief Officer, South America Division, Latin American and Caribbean Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan / Division for Collaboration with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and Descendants (“Nikkei”) in Latin America)

**Satomi Nakashima**

(South America Division, Latin American and Caribbean Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan / Division for Collaboration with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and Descendants (“Nikkei”) in Latin America)

**Hitomi Sekiguchi**

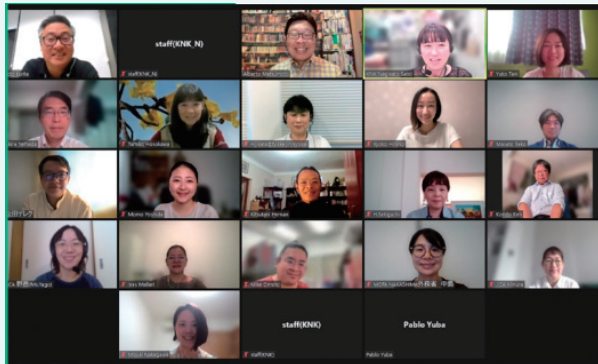
(Former Consul General at the Consulate-General of Japan in Manaus)

**Naoko Yago**

(Planning and Migration Affairs Division, Latin America and the Caribbean Department, JICA)

**Akira Yamada**

(Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Brazil)

**Summary**

Mr. Kurita, a fourth-generation Japanese American, is the Director of the Japanese Pavilion (Japanese Garden) operated by the Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Japonesa e de Assistência Social (“Bunkyo”) and the general manager of the Japan House Sao Paulo’s operational headquarters.

The Japanese Pavilion was operating at a loss, so by bringing together young people and those with knowledge of the event, and making the space available to all citizens beyond just the Nikkei com-

munity, attendance increased and the operation became profitable. It also partnered with Sanrio to plan activities related to Japanese pop culture, collaborated with prefectural associations and local governments to create exhibits related to each prefecture, and presented a wide variety of other exhibits.

Meanwhile, Japan House is a center for international communication established as a project of the Japanese government, and draws countless visitors for providing free exhibits of contemporary art and Japanese technology. Examples were also raised of youth exchange activities held in Brazil, Paraguay, Mexico, Argentina, and other countries based on the Peruvian youth exchange program. This activity targets young people aged between 13 and 30 years old, and provides them with the opportunity to visit different countries, make friends with people from around the world, and learn about the history of Japanese immigration. The majority of participants are Nikkei, giving rise to leaders in the Nikkei community in each region and building international relationships. Scholarship events can lead to opportunities involving Nikkei who do not belong to organizations, and there was also an emphasis on the importance of Japanese interest in and appreciation for the young people currently participating in the activities.

**Comments from Observers**

Ms. Hosokawa, Director of Centro de Estudos Nipo Brasileiros, stated that while the characteristics and current circumstances of the Nikkei community in Brazil vary from region to region, Nikkei culture contributes to the development of local communities owing to the strength of learning from cooperation, time management and other aspects through participation in volunteer activities within the Nikkei community. Ms. Sekiguchi noted that while there is a common theme in that many Nikkei have been involved in Nikkei organizations since childhood and have been influenced by their parents and relatives, it is important to listen to local feedback because each region faces different challenges. She suggested collaborating with prefectures and communicating their appeal, because organization management and shared values are challenges that need to be addressed in order to integrate with the next generation of Nikkei.

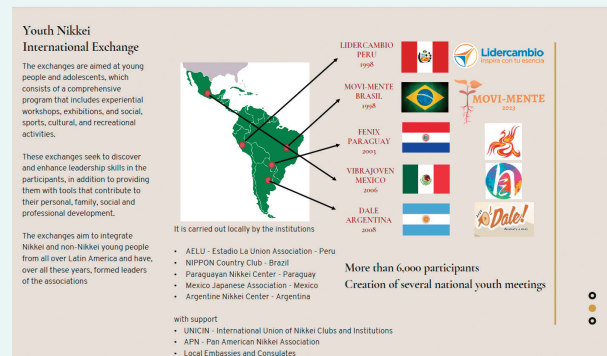
Based on his experience as Ambassador to Mexico and Ambassador to Brazil, Mr. Yamada also noted the need to provide opportunities for online interactions and activities involving youth in Japan, saying that if related organizations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, JICA, local governments, etc.) interested in the Nikkei community on the Japanese side work together, they can exert greater power.

JICA's Ms. Nogo noted that trainees under its Nikkei Supporter Program are contributing to Japan's multicultural coexistence and giving back the knowledge and skills they gained from their training to their own countries after returning home, and that JICA will exchange information between relevant parties and disseminate information on scholarship programs in order to promote the activities

of future generations.

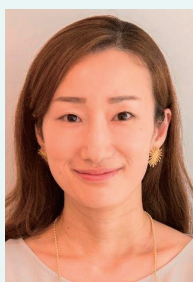
## Comments from Study Group Members

Mr. Matsuda noted that many Nikkei children who grew up in Japan have lost the connection they had with their parents' country and culture, and that interacting with JICA, Nikkei scholarship students and others to experience different cultures and the Nikkei experience can increase interest in their own roots, providing opportunities for collaboration. Mr. Omoto stressed the need to provide an avenue where individuals can join Nikkei organizations at any time and be inspired, as the timing of participation in Nikkei organizations varies from person to person.



## Sixth Study Group: September 6, 2023 (Wed)

Kyoko Hirano



Born in Tokyo and currently lives in Sao Paulo.

Holds a master's degree in conflict journalism from the United Nations University for Peace in Costa Rica. As Vice Consul General of the Consulate General of Japan in Sao Paulo since 2017, she has been instrumental in the Japan House Sao Paulo project, a strategic dissemination center for the Japanese government. Working as a consultant for PR of Japanese products to Brazil since 2020. Also interested in Brazilian schools in Japan and their communities, and visits Brazilian schools throughout Japan.

Observers:

Eri Kobayashi

(Owner, Guesthouse yamaju)

Ken Kondo

(Chief Officer, South America Division, Latin American and Caribbean Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan / Division for Collaboration with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and Descendants ("Nikkei") in Latin America)

Andre Nakandakari

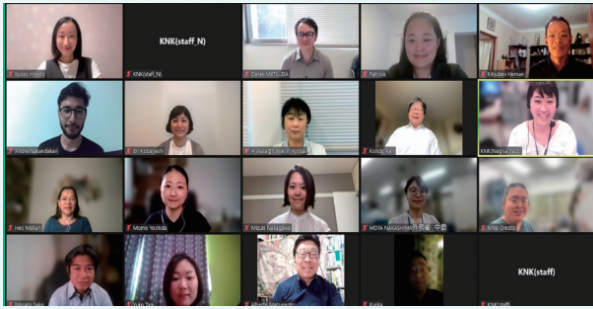
(Reporter, Diario Brasil Nippou)

Satomi Nakashima

(South America Division, Latin American and Caribbean Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan / Division for Collaboration with Communities of Japanese Immigrants and Descendants ("Nikkei") in Latin America)

Patricia Takehana

(Assistant to the President of the Sociedade Brasileira de Cultura Japonesa e de Assistência Social of Sao Paulo and representative of the "Culture Festival")



## Summary

Ms. Hirano stated that she is currently working to build a basketball court in a favela (slum) in Rio de Janeiro and arrange basketball classes, and through her experience working at the consulate in Sao Paulo and visiting Brazilian schools in Japan, she hopes that Nikkei will be proud to represent two cultures and have confidence in the Nikkei culture. She suggested that Nikkei are reliable partners, important, and could help break through the stagnation and intolerance in Japanese society.

She also proposed that, starting with Licensed Agencies for Relief in Asia (LARA) and working through the economic partnership of working away from home, Japanese society and Nikkei abroad should work together in creating specific and objective indicators of identity, social intolerance and lifestyle difficulties, in order to improve common social challenges with the view to new partnerships.

## Comments from Observers

Ms. Kobayashi, who has been contributing to the revitalization of local communities in Japan, expressed her opinion that moving to a rural area made her aware of cultural and linguistic differences within Japan. She noted that it is important to eliminate boundaries that exist, not only among cultures and nationalities, but also among Japanese

people, and that the desire to know more will lead to the dissolution of boundaries.

Ms. Takehana cited the success of Nikkei Community events during COVID-19, which were held online and attracted artisans from various regions and broadened their clientele. She also stated that she is still trying to achieve new levels of participation going forward, but that she came to Japan as a JICA trainee and learned about the history of migration, for which she was very grateful, and that this led her to her current activities in the Nikkei community.

Andre Nakandakari, who grew up in Japan and is now a reporter for the *Diario Brasil Nippou*, said that being exposed to Japanese culture and learning about the history of immigration helped him rediscover his own identity, and that met up with a group of returnees to Brazil, the "Ainoko Kai," to assist those in similar circumstances live with confidence. Mr. Kondo stated the need to present the benefits of engaging with Japan to those who have not had much contact with the Nikkei community or Japan, as well as the need for the Japanese government to provide a variety of opportunities, methods, and avenues, such as JICA study abroad programs, training, and access to history.

## Comments from Study Group Members

Mr. Omoto stated that culture is something each person has the right to choose, that the fusion of cultures generates a new culture, that for cultures that have a history and are rare and valuable, the Japanese government and Nikkei can help preserve them by working to promote them, and that it would be good if Japan took having multiple languages and cultures for granted to promote international exchange.

### 日系人にしか担えない役割

- 多様性の中で育まれた日本文化、日本社会
- 母国を助けてくれた日系人＝連携の始まり
- 日本の役に立ちたい、日系人の役に立ちたい、ブラジルの役に立ちたい日系人の存在
- 日系人がいてくれたから、という感覚は日本でも可能

### 提案：第3次連携の始まり

- 第1次連携：ララ物資
- 第2次連携：出稼ぎブーム
- 第3次連携：客観的なINDEX
  - 日本 - 日本社会に関する客観的な数字の改善
  - 海外 - 日系人の日系性に関する客観的な数値の改善や日系という価値の再確認

# Chapter 3-3 : Exchange of Opinions on the Nikkei Scholarship Program

On August 26, 2023, a meeting was held for exchanging views on "examining the possibility of working with the next generation of Nikkei" by Nikkei scholars studying in Japan at a training session of the Nippon Foundation's Nikkei Scholarship Program.

## Discussion Topics

1. Discuss in your group and decide on one social issue in your country or Nikkei community.
2. Think of ways of overcoming the issue you have chosen. What individuals, organizations, companies, and tools (social media, online events, etc.) will be needed?

## Each group presentation

**Group 1:** The challenge was to revitalize Nikkei communities, and a generational divide exists because Nikkei organizations have an image of being comprised of old people. Proposals included streaming events and running competitions to plan events.

**Group 2:** Ties between Nikkei and Nikkei communities are waning, and young people have the need and desire to participate in and belong to the Brazilian community. There is a decline in Japanese language proficiency and generational divide in terms of sense of identity. More opportunities for interaction with Japanese people should be provided, and efforts should be made to publicize the scholarship program. There should also be a short-term scholarship program. The group also suggested the Brazilian side to create a Brazilian branch of the Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad to better promote the scholarship program.

**Group 3:** There are few active members of Nikkei organizations and no real presence, with hardly any social activities planned. The lack of libraries and scarcity of books in Japanese are some social challenges. The concept of a mobile library project was raised, and making books on the Japanese

After presenting the following three discussion topics, participants were separated into six groups for discussion, and at the end of the session, presentations were made to share the views raised by each group. Alberto Matsumoto closed by providing general comments.

3. Come up with specific ideas on how to address the measures raised in 2. and how to cooperate with the relevant parties. How can parties coordinate efforts to implement these measures?

language and culture available would encourage people to become interested in Japan. A suggestion was to call on APJ (Peruvian Japanese Association) and other Nikkei organizations, the Nippon Foundation, and companies such as BOOK OFF in Japan as participating organizations and to request donations.

**Group 4:** Nikkei communities need a stronger sense of identity. There is racial discrimination, and even among the same Nikkei, there is a diverse range of identities. Respect for diversity is needed. Different countries also have a range of varying values. Promoting employment for young Nikkei and sharing and discussing issues among other countries are important. It also requires understanding by other parties serving as a cultural bridge.

**Group 5:** There is a decline in Kenjinkai. Passing on the reins to future generations is not going smoothly. There is a generational divide. The number of Nikkei is also decreasing. Along with the selection of a trustworthy person, financial support is needed to serve as "kaikans" for events and discussions.

**Group 6:** Nikkei identity is evolving and some are



not proud of their Nikkei roots. It is important to create a forum for discussing experiences and history, as this will help address such concerns. Utilize and provide information on Facebook and Insta-

### General comments by Alberto Matsumoto

Generational divides are common in all countries, and are created by differences in position. Having the time to think about the future of Nikkei communities after graduating college (after the scholarship ends) is difficult due to challenges people face in terms of their own career and family, but the knowledge and experience gained here and now is important. Values that international students have do not align with those of others, but these are views that we need to cherish. Thirty years ago, such an outlook did not yet exist for Nikkei living in Japan, but should evolve over a span of 10 or 20 years—the same is also true for Latin America. That is why

gram as a means of collaboration. Collaboration will be possible if information is shared by other Nikkei organizations and JICA.

we need to make the necessary preparations.

While it is of course important to achieve personal growth in one's field of expertise, being able to keep one's options open for opportunities from a diverse range of people is also an essential skill. The value in such an approach may not be immediately clear today, but there is no doubt that such information and experiences will prove to be advantageous in the future. Mr. Matsumoto highlighted the potential for development and action like their brilliant senior colleagues, and advised them to maintain a positive attitude.





# Conclusion

Finally, we would like once again to express our deepest gratitude to Mr. Alberto Matsumoto for taking the time out of his busy schedule as facilitator for this study group, and to the committee members who made presentations and proposals on behalf of the study group. We would also like to thank Mr. Yuba for his assistance as a Portuguese interpreter.

We would also like to express our gratitude to those who participated in the study group as observers and the Nikkei scholars who offered to exchange their views at the Nippon Foundation/Nikkei Scholarship Program training sessions, and we appreciate the many valuable comments we received.

The Nippon Foundation was the main organizer of this study group, and entrusted management of the group to the Association for Nikkei & Japanese Abroad. This project would not have been possible without the support of The Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad. We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the assistance received.