

International Symposium Report

Japan's Refugee Reception System in Transition and Local Community

**Learning from the Cooperation between the Local Governments
and NGOs in the United States**

Tokyo 2010

Organized by



Japan Association for Refugees

Sponsored by



International Symposium Report

Japan's Refugee Reception System in Transition and Local Community: Learning from the Cooperation between the Local Governments and NGOs in the United States

Japan Association for Refugees

Tokyo 2010

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Introduction

In December 2008, the Japanese government decided to accept significantly more refugees under the third country resettlement program. This will be the first program in Asia. Japan will accept approximately 90 Burmese refugees as a three-year pilot program.

Currently Japan accepts refugees under the refugee status determination system, but the annual number of recognized refugees is only a few dozen. This figure is extremely small compared to western countries, which individually accept several thousands of refugees each year. Therefore, Japan's new commitment to accepting refugees for resettlement can be regarded as a meaningful step towards positive policy changes.

Since the resettlement program requires a comprehensive system to oversee the selection process, on-arrival training and integration, various actors must work together sharing their expertise and knowledge. In particular, local governments and the various actors within civil society will be required to play major roles in providing educational support, job assistance, cultural exchange opportunities, and so on. The participation or contribution of various stakeholders who have not previously been directly involved in refugee assistance is to be expected.

In order to learn from the practices of United States, which receives the highest number of resettling refugees in the world, and to formulate effective resettlement assistance in Japan, Japan Association for Refugees started the project "Refugee Protection in the New Era: Learning from the Resettlement Practice in the United States", sponsored by the Center for Global Partnership of Japan Foundation.

As a part of the project, we held a symposium during July 2010 entitled, "Japan's Refugee Reception System in Transition and Local Community: Learning from the Cooperation between the Local Governments and NGOs in the United States", at the University of Tokyo's Komaba Campus. We invited a Maryland government official in charge of refugee resettlement and an expert from a non-governmental organization, which discussed the resettlement program in the United States, and the roles of local government and citizens in refugee protection.

This report is a summary of the issues discussed as part of the symposium together with relevant references. We hope that this report gives rise to greater concern for refugee issues and the development of refugee protection policies.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Center for Global Partnership of Japan Foundation; the University of Tokyo's Graduate Program on Human Security, Graduate

School of Arts and Sciences; the Human Mobility Studie (Corporate Sponsored Program: Hogakukan Co. ltd.); and the Center of Sustainable Peace Studies, Institute of Advanced Global Studies (IAGS) for their generous support.

Eri Ishikawa
Secretary General
Japan Association for Refugees

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Program Overview

International Symposium on Japan's Refugee Reception System in Transition and Local Community: Learning from the Cooperation between the Local Governments and NGOs in the United States

Date and Time: Saturday, July 3, 2010, 2:00pm - 5:30pm

Location: Building 18, 1st Floor, Komaba Campus, the University of Tokyo

Organized by Japan Association for Refugees

Co-hosted by the University of Tokyo's Graduate Program of Human Security, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences; the Human Mobility Studies Program (Corporate Sponsored Program: Hogakukan Co. Ltd.); and the Center of Sustainable Peace Studies at the Institute of Advanced Global Studies (IAGS).

Sponsored by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership

Program:

SESSION I (2:00pm - 3:30pm)

Opening Remarks

Prof. Shinji Yamashita

Professor, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the University of Tokyo

Keynote Speeches

Refugee Resettlement Program in the United States:

Practical Partnership between Public and Private Actors in Maryland

Dr. Martin Ford

Associate Director, Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees at the Department of Human Resources

Perspectives on Refugee Reception in the Resettlement Program in Japan:

The Roles of the State and Local Governments

Prof. Yasushi Iguchi

Professor, School of Economics, Kwansei Gakuin University

SESSION II (3:45pm - 5:30pm)

Panel Discussion

The Roles of Local Governments and NGOs in Refugee Integration

Dr. Martin Ford

Associate Director, Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees at the Department of Human Resources

Mr. Robert Carey

Vice President, Resettlement and Migration Policy, the International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Mr. Daniel Alkhal

Senior Protection Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representation in Japan

Ms. Eri Ishikawa

Secretary General, Japan Association for Refugees

Ms. Marip Seng Bu

Burmese Refugee

Moderator:

Dr. Petrice Flowers

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii

Closing Remarks

Prof. Hiroshi Homma

Senior Advisor, Japan Association for Refugees and Professor Emeritus, Hosei University

MC:

Hiroaki Ishii,

Executive Director, Japan Association for Refugees (JAR)

Profiles of Guest Speakers, Panelists and Moderator

Prof. Shinji Yamashita

Professor, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the University of Tokyo



Shinji Yamashita studies the development of new culture arising out of globalization by focusing on tourism and migration from a transnational perspective. His interests include immigration policy, citizenship, and human rights policy with an applied anthropological approach at the University of Tokyo's Graduate Program in Human Security. He is currently conducting research in public and world heritage anthropological studies.

Dr. Martin Ford

Associate Director

Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees at the Department of Human Resources



Martin Ford is Associate Director of the Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees at the Department of Human Resources, where he manages refugee resettlement services. Prior to coming to MORA in 1992, Ford was the Executive Director of the Maryland Ethnic Heritage Commission. Trained as a cultural anthropologist, he was a Peace Corps Volunteer and a Fulbright Scholar in Liberia, West Africa. There his research focused on the emergence of ethnic tensions leading to that country's civil war. Ford currently pursues interests in cross-cultural relations as well as immigration trends and policy

in the US, and has served on a variety of boards concerned with immigrant and refugee integration. These include the Maryland State Department of Education's English Language Learners Advisory Committee, the Governor's Task Force on the Preservation of Heritage Language Skills in Maryland, and the advisory board of Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services. He has written for publications such as Immigration Daily and National Humanities Magazine, as well as the Washington Post and Baltimore Sun. He holds degrees from Rutgers University, Ohio University, and Binghamton University.

Prof. Yasushi Iguchi

Professor, School of Economics, Kwansei Gakuin University



Yasushi Iguchi graduated from Hitotsubashi University and joined the Ministry of Labor in 1976. From 1980 to 1982, he studied at the University of Erlangen-Nuernberg and Federal Institute for Employment and Vocation in Germany. He left the Ministry of Labor after serving as the Director of Foreign Workers' Affairs in 1995. He received his PhD from Kwansei Gakuin University in 1999. He has served as a guest researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Law in Munich, Germany, and as a Special Member of the Council on Regulatory

Reform, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan. He is currently the Director of the Research Center on Economies with Low Fertility, and professor at the School of Economics in Kwansei Gakuin University. He is also an advisor to the Congress of Municipalities with High Density of Foreign Inhabitants. He is the author of *The New Era of Labor Migration* (2001).

Mr. Robert Carey

Vice President, Resettlement and Migration Policy, the International Rescue Committee (IRC)



Robert Carey leads IRC's efforts in supporting systematic change in domestic and international resettlement. He works closely with the Advocacy and External Relations Departments to improve both the way refugees are resettled and supported in the U.S., and the mechanisms through which the UN and the international community address the needs of those requiring resettlement. Bob is the current chair of Refugee Council USA, a coalition of non-profit organizations focused on refugee protection, and frequently represents the IRC at meetings of the UNHCR and on U.S. delegations. Prior to his current position, Mr. Carey oversaw the department's operations as Vice President. Before joining the IRC, he worked as the director of immigration for the Tolstoy Foundation, and also in the private sector. He is a renowned public figure and has frequently discussed issues of resettlement, refugee admissions and U.S. immigration policy in the media. He has appeared on programs hosted by the BBC, CNN, MSNBC and the National Public Radio, and been interviewed by *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* and *The San Jose Mercury News* among other publications.

Mr. Daniel Alkhal

Senior Protection Officer,

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representation in Japan



Daniel Alkhal is the Senior Legal Officer of UNHCR, Tokyo Office. Prior to his current post, he had worked for UNHCR in Lebanon, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and UNHCR Turkey. Prior to his current position, Mr. Alkhal was a family and couples therapist. He holds a Juris Doctor degree from the City University of New York.

Ms. Eri Ishikawa

Secretary General, Japan Association for Refugees (JAR)



Eri Ishikawa has been involved in refugee protection activities by JAR since its establishment in 1999. As the Secretary General of JAR, she is involved in various activities, such as managing JAR's protection & assistance activities, organizing and lecturing at protection-related international conferences and workshops in and outside Japan, promoting dialogue with various actors such as the legislative and relevant administrative branches of the Japanese government to improve refugee policy. She is also a board member of Japan Association for Migration Policy Studies (JAMPS). Her article 'Japan's Refugee Protection – Present Situation and Future Prospect' was published in *Task for the Immigration Policy* (Akashi Shoten, March 2002). Also, her article, 'Protection of Refugees and Clinical Law' was published in *Hogaku Seminar* (Vol 600, December 2004).

Ms. Marip Seng Bu

Burmese Refugee



Marip Seng Bu is a Kachin refugee from Myanmar (Burma). After her graduation in 1988, she participated in an anti-government demonstration in Yangon. She fled to Japan in 1992 to escape persecution. She applied for refugee status in 2003 for which she was granted the Special Permission to Stay in 2005. She currently lives with her husband, also a Kachin refugee, and four Japan-born daughters in Tokyo. For a number of years, she has been devoted to promoting democracy in Burma and human rights for the Kachin ethnic minority. As Secretary General of Kachin National Organization Japan and a Coordinator of Kachin Women's Association Japan, she not only raises awareness about the human rights situation of the Kachin people in Burma, but also supports Kachin refugees in Japan by providing language interpreting, as well as legal and social assistance.

Dr. Petrice Flowers

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii



Petrice R. Flowers is an Assistant Professor in the University of Hawaii—Mānoa's Political Science Department and a member of the UH Center for Japanese Studies where she teaches international relations and Japanese politics courses at the graduate and undergraduate level. Dr. Flowers received her Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Minnesota in 2002. She was a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science Post-doctoral Research Fellow at the University of Tokyo from 2002 to 2004. Her most recent article, "Failure to Protect Refugees?: Domestic Institutions, International Organizations and Civil Society in Japan," was published in the *Journal of Japanese Studies*. Her book, *Refugees, Women and Weapons*:

International Norm Adoption and Compliance in Japan, was published in 2009 from Stanford University Press. Dr. Flowers returned to Japan for the 2009-2010 academic year as a Fulbright Scholar of Hosei University to conduct research for her project, “Expanding Protection: Increasing Coordination of Refugee and Anti-Trafficking Policies in Japan and Korea”.

Prof. Hiroshi Homma

Senior Advisor, Japan Association for Refugees (JAR) & Professor Emeritus, Hosei University



Prior to his career as an academic, Hiroshi Honma worked at the National Diet Library and served as the Director of the Politics and Public Administration Division and Director of the Foreign Defense Division. He then became professor of law at Hosei University until March 2008. He is also a professor emeritus at Hosei University and Surugadai University. He obtained his doctorate degree in law. He teaches the courses entitled, “Refugees in the world” at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and “International Refugee Law and International Human Rights Law” at Surugadai University School of Law. He serves as senior advisor for

Japan Association for Refugees.

Summary of the Symposium

Japan Association for Refugees (JAR) hosted an international symposium entitled “Japan’s Refugee Reception System in Transition and Local Community: Learning from the Cooperation between the Local Governments and NGOs in the United States” on July 3rd, 2010 at the University of Tokyo’s Komaba Campus.



As Japan has launched the third country refugee resettlement program from the fiscal year 2010, in this symposium we focused on learning from the experiences in the United States which plays a leading role in resettlement support and considered how refugee assistance in Japan should be structured.

From the United States, we invited Dr. Martin Ford, Associate Director for Maryland Office for Refugee and Asylees at the Department of Human Resources, and Mr. Robert Carey, Vice President of Resettlement and Migration Policy at the International Rescue Committee (IRC); an NGO providing humanitarian support activities in the US and various countries around the world. They talked about resettlement activities through partnership of public and private actors in the United States.

The program started with the opening remarks given by Professor Shinji Yamashita from the Graduate School of Arts and Science, the University of Tokyo who provided an introduction for the Human Security Program, the Research Center for Sustainable Peace of the Institute for Advanced Global Studies and the Center for Documentation on Refugee and Migrants as well as his expectations to the symposium.

In the first keynote speech, Dr. Ford talked about resettlement program administered by local governments and various actors within Maryland’s civil society. A comprehensive support program is available for refugees upon arrival which provides accommodations and is designed to establish self-sufficiency within the host country. In the US, NGOs as well as volunteers and local communities are playing central roles in those programs.

In the next keynote speech, Professor Yasushi Iguchi from the School of Economics at Kwansai Gakuin University talked about refugee reception in the context of Japanese resettlement policy. He focused his analysis on addressing this issue from the perspectives of the state and local governments about what their roles should be. Professor Iguchi mentioned that refugee

reception does not end with a short term support from the state and that it is critical to have follow-up programs administered by local governments. He highlighted that in this context, it is especially important for governments to ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for learning Japanese.

In Session II, the panel discussion was held with participation from Mr. Daniel Alkhal, Senior Protection Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representation in Japan, Mr. Robert Carey from IRC, Ms. Eri Ishikawa, Secretary General of JAR, Burmese Refugee Ms. Marip Sen Bu and Dr. Ford who also appeared in the first session. The discussion was moderated by Dr. Petrice Flowers, Associate Professor for Department of Political Science at the University of Hawaii.

Mr. Alkhal introduced the current situation of resettlement and UNHCR's programs; Mr. Carey shared information about the resettlement programs in the United States, and activities of the IRC; Ms. Ishikawa talked about current situation and challenges of refugees in Japan, followed by Ms. Sen Bu's own experiences in Japan.

Dr. Flowers commented on the importance of comprehensive support by various actors at the local level as well as partnership between volunteers and professionals.

The fact that there was a great deal of interest these issues amongst the audience was reflected by a number of questions raised during the question and answer period. There seemed to be a lot of concern about the disclosure of information on the third country resettlement in particular as this raised awareness about the importance of nurturing an open forum on the issues.

In the closing remarks, Professor Hiroshi Homma, Senior Advisor of JAR and Professor Emeritus at Hosei University talked about significance of learning from the American system. He also mentioned that Japan's attempts to establish a comprehensive refugee resettlement program can be a model for third country resettlement in other parts of Asia.



There were 231 people who attended the symposium and this was the largest event hosted by the JAR. The event was also received news coverage which created significant focus on the topic by media.

Opening Remarks

Prof. Shinji Yamashita

Professor, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the University of Tokyo

Having specialized in anthropology, I also serve as a member of steering committee for the Graduate Program of Human Security at the University of Tokyo's Graduate School of Arts.

The Graduate Program of Human Security was initiated in April 2004 and was restructured as of April 2010. With that, three centers related to human security were added to Institute for Advanced Global Studies; Research Center for Sustainable Peace, Research Center for Sustainable Development, and Center for African Studies. One of them, Research Center for Sustainable Peace served as a co-organizer of this symposium.



Thanks to sponsorship from Hogakukan, a lecture series entitled, Human Mobility Studies started this April. This is closely related to this symposium. We are still in the initial phase, but will implement various activities in the near future.

This September, the “Human Security Consortium” will be held with the Graduate Program on Human Security at the University of Tokyo as its coordinator.

Refugee and human security

The concept of human security is closely related to refugees as this was conceptualized by the former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Dr. Sadako Ogata based on her field work in refugee assistance.

Japan will start its third country resettlement program for refugees this September. For the existing staff within the program, it is the time for our activities to be put into practice.

I am very pleased with the timing of the International Symposium, “Japan’s Refugee Reception System in Transition and Local Community: Lessons from Partnership between Public and Private in the United States”. I hope to see valuable discussions in this event.

Keynote Speeches

Refugee Resettlement Program in the United States: Practical Partnership between Public and Private Actors in Maryland

Dr. Martin Ford

Associate Director, Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees at the Department of Human Resources



Introduction of topic

Practices of refugee resettlement in Maryland will be reviewed to give Japanese authorities and advocates an idea of what they may do to make resettlement work in Japan.

The Japanese government agreed to do a pilot project to accept about 30 Burmese refugees per year for the next three years. The way in which this project will be evaluated is unclear but it seems like a pivotal moment for resettlement in Japan.

An animating idea behind refugee protection is the understanding that refugees are created by accident and that if we were in the same situation as refugees, we would want to be protected ourselves.

Process of domestic resettlement in Maryland

The resettlement program in the US has 3 levels; public funding from the federal government to state administered programs, which work in partnership with private, non-profit agencies. 40-some states have refugee resettlement programs and the total budget for all of them is 708 million dollars, 10 million dollars for the Maryland office. All funding from the federal government is administered through state programs.

In the US, refugee resettlement is a public- private partnership. Administration work consists of buying services from different providers, which are mostly NGOs and local governments. The Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees (MORA) is funded to provide adjustment services; transitional services for the people with the greatest need. In this case, adjustment means helping them become self-sufficient as quickly as possible.

Background of state Maryland

Maryland is often called “America in miniature”, because it is a sort of microcosm of many of the patterns that represent the US as a whole. It is a middle-sized state with a very ethnically and racially diverse population, of which 13% are foreign born. Refugee resettlement contributes to this diversity, though it is only 5-10% of the overall immigrant population. As for the breakdown of refugees resettled in Maryland, in earlier days the vast majority was from Africa but recently the Asian population is growing, particularly Iraqis, Bhutanese, and Burmese.

Core services

There are 10 primary NGOs called voluntary agencies which receive funding from the state and federal government. Five of the voluntary agencies operate in Maryland. Diversity of the refugee population provides a challenge to resettlement, such as the need for interpreting different languages, knowledge of many cultures, and understanding for different socio-cultural and experiential backgrounds.

Maryland has a fairly innovative resettlement center called the one-stop model. A newly arrived refugee has to go through various procedures, and the one-stop center was established from the idea that it is much better if all necessary services are provided in one place. At the one-stop center, different partners offer different services such as language education, safety-net benefits, cash assistance, medical screening as required by law in the US, case management, employment etc. These various procedures have become more integrated over time.

Of the core services, orientation, which happens over the first few months of refugees’ arrival, is perhaps the most important. Since refugees tend to have distorted views of life in the US, they are convinced that things are not going to be easy, that they have to work hard, and that luxuries are acquired only through work.

In the orientation, a case-worker works with refugees to setup a family self-sufficiency plan, which is a contract that familiarizes refugees with economic realities, sets goals, and lays out steps to achieve those goals. Orientation is necessary for the refugees and their host community as well; all services refugees will use are to be components in the resettlement process. Years ago it was widely thought that the immigrant in question bore most of the responsibility for integrating in the resettlement process. However, today most people conceive adjustment as a two-way process.

Language is another core service. The chief purpose is to prepare refugees for employment, so that English classes do not just concentrate on grammar but focus on practical skills as well. At the same time an employment counselor speaks to companies employing refugees, and a case worker works with employable refugees. Employed refugees leave class, but flexible schedules are provided for them to continue studying English.

After suffering in countries without freedom of opportunity, many of the refugees appreciate the new environment and are willing to work hard. The employment service's job allows them to learn about the American workplace and help them up the "job ladder".

Providing adequate care for children is one of the most important aspects of the resettlement process. MORA has an after-school project for refugee children. Elderly people are sometimes the most victimized, or marginalized, by a move. Separate classes are held to deal with different learning speed and help them acquire citizenship. There are homebound women, typically Muslim women to whose houses volunteers go and teach English.

Refugees have endured trauma and violence. Physical and mental health problems are expected and must be addressed in a resettlement program. Certain diseases, such as tuberculosis, can jeopardize a national program if regarded as health threat to the general population.

MORA tries to encourage community support through volunteerism. It is important to acknowledge potential supporters what to do. One employer was awarded for not only hiring refugees, but also making a career path for refugees, retaining and promoting them in his company.

America has a tradition of immigration, which makes many Americans sympathetic and helpful towards immigrants. There is no such tradition in Japan, which may not necessarily be a barrier but should be considered in the process of taking in refugees.



Closing remarks

Two months ago, the Tibetan holy leader Dalai Lama visited Switzerland to express thanks to the Swiss people for accepting 1,000 Tibetan refugees in 1951. Their population has now increased to 4,000 and they have become well integrated into that society. 20% of Swiss population is foreign born, considerably higher than the US. Recently Switzerland voted

not to establish fixed quotas limiting the inflow of immigrants. One hopes that the Burmese pilot project in Japan ends like the Tibetan case.

Outlook for Refugee reception Through “Third Country Resettlement”: Roles of the State, Region, and Local Governments

Prof. Yasushi Iguchi

Professor, School of Economics, Kwansei Gakuin University



Committee for Localities with a Concentrated Foreign Population

Since 2009, I have been working as the advisor of the Congress of Municipalities with High Density of Foreign Inhabitants. For the past decade, this organization has been working to support the local government, especially in terms of providing Japanese language education and psychological care for children in the process of integrating foreigners.

The reason why I am speaking in front of you today, even though I am not an expert on refugee issues, is that the work by local communities which has supported foreigners from South American countries is actually closely linked to refugee issues.

Integration policy

In Europe, measures to settle foreign residents are referred to broadly as integration policy. In Japan, we use the term ‘multi-cultural co-existence,’ which is the counterpart for ‘integration policy.’ In order for ‘multi-cultural coexistence’ to work out, not only policy measures by the central government, but also the role of local government is crucial.

The background of foreign workers and refugees

We must think about the background regarding refugees and foreign workers coming in to Japan. There are cities which have a labor shortage, and have therefore actively invited foreigners. However, we must understand why they have come to Japan in the first place. Regarding refugee acceptance, we must think about issues such as why the refugees are in their current status, or why they are forced to live in refugee camps.

Japan’s refugee acceptance

After the Vietnam War, many people arrived to Japan as Indo-Chinese refugees, and Japan accepted 11,000 refugees. Japan acceded to the Refugee Convention, but the number of those asylum-seekers receiving refugee status is very low.

After the law was revised in 2005, the number of refugees granted humanitarian status has

increased significantly. This includes a wide number of Burmese refugees.

Current issues of cities with a high concentration of foreign residents

Cities with a high density of foreign residents are dealing with issues related to protecting the rights of foreigners. Some residents are faced with difficulties such as not having insurance, being unable to go to school, and so on.

Also, it is necessary to guarantee Japanese education for foreigners. If they are not able to receive education, they will not be able to be employed, and thus become dependent on social welfare. The issue of Japanese education is a very significant problem.



Learning from the acceptance of Indo-Chinese Refugees

The problem with the reception of Indo-Chinese refugees into Japanese communities was that the 6 months intensive training in a facility could not guarantee subsequent self-sufficient lifestyles for refugees. The Japanese language training might have provided the refugees with minimum skills required for daily life. However, in most cases they could not acquire

enough Japanese required for employment. Based on a survey, the support provided by refugee counselors did not provide significant help.

Considering the difficulty of Japanese language, vocational training based on the six month Japanese language training could only allow for many of the Indo-Chinese refugees to get low-skill and low-paying jobs.

For refugee children, whether or not they graduated from high school made a big difference. Those who were unable to graduate from high school are often forced into unstable situations for the rest of their lives.

Guarantee of Japanese education

In the Congress of Municipalities with High Density of Foreign Inhabitants, we are placing focus on being able to receive Japanese education. It is important that we focus on practical language skills such as Japanese skills to live, work, and study.

Support by the local government

It is important that we look for local governments with the potential to, or possess the will to accept resettlement refugees. In order to do so, we need to start with the basics, such as setting the model of Japanese proficiency. It is important that we not only think about maintaining the economy and local community, but also focus our energies toward creating an Asian region which protects human rights. It is the local government and community which should build a new infrastructure for foreign residents.

Panel Discussion



The Roles of Local Governments and NGOs in Refugee Integration

Panelists

Dr. Martin Ford

Associate Director, Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees at the Department of Human Resources

Mr. Robert Carey

Vice President, Resettlement and Migration Policy, the International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Mr. Daniel Alkhal

Senior Protection Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Representation in Japan

Ms. Eri Ishikawa

Secretary General, Japan Association for Refugees (JAR)

Ms. Marip Seng Bu

Burmese Refugee

Moderator

Dr. Petrice Flowers

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii

Mr. Daniel Alkhal

**Senior Protection Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Representation in Japan**



What is resettlement?

The objective of resettlement is to give protection to refugees. We try to assist refugees so they can lead a prosperous life, including social and legal assistance.

The objectives of resettlement

There are two types of refugee resettlement: UNHCR and the government acting together, and the country accepting the refugees acting individually. UNHCR tries to solve the issue in the following three ways.

1. Local integration: settling refugees in the countries where they are seeking asylum
2. Voluntary repatriation: when circumstances that have made a certain country, up until recently, an exit point for refugees have changed-either for individual refugees or large groups-and as a result they have decided to return to their countries of origin or habitual residences
3. Third country resettlement: usually taking refugees from the states where they sought asylum and were recognized as refugees but need better protection or seek a higher quality of life, and placing them in another country for resettlement

Basic principles of resettlement

States do resettlement under no obligations. They actually choose to do so because it suits them, or they want to share the burden of international responsibility. Refugee-accepting countries are instrumental in easing the burden on countries in close proximity to refugee-producing countries.

The stages of the resettlement process

1. Identification of refugees in need of being considered for resettlement.
2. Assessment of eligibility and need for resettlement.
3. Preparation of documents and Resettlement Registration Form (RRF)
4. UNCHR's decision to accept/endorse submission
5. Submission of RRF to resettlement country and consideration by the resettlement country
6. Decision of resettlement country to accept/decline/defer candidates.
7. Pre-departure procedure such as counselling and medical check-up. Many NGOs cooperate in

this procedure.

8. Reception and integration in the resettlement country. This is the most important process, as refugees remember will usually have a vivid memory of the initial period.

Mr. Robert Carey, Vice President, Resettlement and Migration Policy, the International Rescue Committee (IRC)



Background of US resettlement program

-The resettlement program in the US was implemented under the Refugee Act of 1951, a federal law implemented at the local level, involving every level of local government and civil society. The Refugee Act of 1980 established the US refugee admissions program and regularized the process by which refugees come to the US. It established systems at the federal level and defined the basic legal rights refugees enjoy once they arrive in the US.

The government office responsible for identifying refugees for resettlement is the US State Department, since it is seen as a component of US foreign as well as humanitarian policy. Once refugees are admitted to the US, services are administered to refugees by the Department of Health and Human Services, which has an office for refugee resettlement.

Overview of IRC

The IRC networks with various local organizations to ensure that the community is prepared, before the refugees' arrival, to provide services such as health and education. It is a primary goal of the program to ensure that community actors know and understand the refugees' story in advance for them to better integrate to the local community.

The IRC was founded 75 years ago at the request of Albert Einstein to respond to the needs of European refugees fleeing the Nazis. It enjoys broad support from the US government and the US population, regardless of which political party they support.

The IRC has assisted over 16 million people who arrived to the US as refugees. Currently there are 10,000 staff members (initially the organization was staffed by a single person) and a budget of \$300 million.

The population coming to the US as refugees is very diverse; currently the US receives refugees primarily from Burma, Nepal, and Iraq, but also from Africa and South and Central America.

The IRC has 22 offices across the US, mostly in major cities where there is a local ethnic community and various services that are targeted to assist refugees.

Programs to support refugees

The IRC has a variety of programs that can facilitate the integration process of refugees.

The community farm and market programs are carried out in urban centers using donated land with diverse groups of refugees and local immigrants. The program has various economic, nutritional, educational, as well as considerable mental health benefits.

The IRC has many after-school programs to assist children in the acculturation process, using volunteers from universities and communities who are trained and supervised by professional instructors.

Community support is a critical component of the IRC's work. The IRC was founded by volunteers and has volunteer boards governing their activities.

The IRC assists refugees in starting businesses through economic development programs, ranging from basic financial literacy to training for establishing workable business development plans. Refugees are a very positive economic force; they start business at a much higher rate than the general population. The IRC respects the refugees' dignity and their right to self-determination.

In the current economic downturn, it has become much more difficult to find suitable jobs for refugees.

Case 1: Refugee from Somalia who runs a goat farm

One refugee from Somalia runs a goat farm and sells goat meat to the refugee and local community in Phoenix, Arizona.

The farm has benefited from a wide variety of programs, such as technical assistance, loan capital, financial education programs, etc., some run by the IRC and some by local community organizations.

The refugee's children have also been assisted both by local schools and tutorial groups largely run by



volunteers.

Volunteers are trained through an extensive orientation program and have specific tasks assigned to them. Expectations for volunteers are high and their position is quite competitive.

Case 2: Liberian woman

One woman arrived in the US in 2006 from Liberia as an asylum seeker. She was a 46 year old single mother and illiterate in her own language.

The woman had requested housing assistance in Baltimore, but did not even know how to read related documents. The IRC put her in an adult literacy program. She is now employed, basically literate and can read and pay bills by herself. She has also begun studying English at a local community college, and also works with a private tutor arranged by the IRC.

This case illustrates that the combination of civil society, volunteers, and NGOs at the local level are critical players which help ensure that limited resources go to areas where they are most needed.

Ms. Eri Ishikawa

Secretary General, Japan Association for Refugees

JAR's activities

Since its establishment in 1999, JAR has provided assistance to each individual refugee who comes to Japan, so that they can lead ordinary and prosperous lives. Its main activities are: 1) social and legal assistance, 2) research and advocacy, 3) information sharing such as PR activities.

The size of our budget increases year by year. For fiscal year 2007, it was 65 million yen. For this fiscal year, it totals to approximately 70 to 80 million yen. We receive support from various organizations including UNHCR, private foundations, corporations, and so on.



Refugee reception in Japan

Japan has received over 11,000 Indo-Chinese refugees since 1978.

Since Japan's accedence to the Refugee Convention, over 500 people were granted with refugee

status while 882 people received humanitarian status. The number of asylum applications has been increasing every year since the 1990's. In 2009, it totaled at 1,388.

From 2010, the third country refugee resettlement will start as a three-year pilot program which will accept approximately 30 Burmese refugees per year.

Challenges during asylum process

The refugee status review takes 2 years on average and 9 years at the longest. The applicants are forced to wait for the results under difficult and unsustainable living conditions. Their legal status during the review period is unstable and they are not allowed to sign up for the national health insurance system.

Another challenge is the fact that the same government organization is in charge of the initial review and appeal process.

The applicants have no access to public support nor work permits during judicial review. Due to very stringent regulation, half of the applicants for refugee status today are not permitted to work and are easily exposed to difficult circumstances.

Refugee assistance at civil society level

The upside of refugee assistance in Japan is the growth of involvement from communities. Some law firms also participate in the assistance as a part of their philanthropy.

More recently, some organizations provide necessary goods such as shelter and food. Students are also actively involved in Japanese language education and exchange activities.

Position of the third country resettlement

The refugees who come to Japan through the third country resettlement program will go through training for Japanese language, social integration and employment acquisition in Tokyo upon one week's orientation.

It is important that various stakeholders from the Japanese government, international organizations, local governments, corporations and refugee communities in Japan are involved and build relationships with each other in the resettlement assistance process from the planning phase.

It is necessary for the public and private spheres to align themselves and present overlapping guidelines for the kind of support that will contribute to success of this program.

Ms. Marip Seng Bu
Burmese Refugee

Application for refugee status in Japan

I escaped to Japan in 1992 for political reasons and married in 1996. I was an overstayer bringing up three children.

Some of my colleagues who joined in the political activities in Burma were arrested or went missing, so it was very dangerous for me to go back to Burma.

My friend told me that obtaining refugee recognition in Japan is “as difficult as catching a star in the sky.” My husband was detained in a facility by the Immigration Control Bureau for overstaying his visa in 2003.



I applied for refugee status twice and went through more than 20 interviews with the Immigration Control Bureau within 2 years

Encounter with Japan Association for Refugees

I came to know JAR through UNHCR during my asylum specialists in refugee assistance and provided me with various kinds of advice on the refugee recognition procedure.

I once tried opening a bank account but my application was rejected because I didn't have a visa. But when I visited the bank again with one of JAR's staff members I was able to open up a bank account.

When we face those who support us, we not only listen to the advice given, but also look at the internal character.

Many refugees have difficulty putting trust in someone else due to their past experiences. Therefore I am truly pleased to have such empathetic consultation that considers refugee perspectives that JAR provides.

Likewise, I will be very happy if more and more Japanese people learn about refugees and take part in providing compassionate support.

Dr. Petrice Flowers

Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Hawaii

About refugee assistance

I think that it is important for us to recognize that at the community level, we are talking about is a diverse set of actors: the local government, NGOs, local residents, refugees, schools, etc. So a lot of what we need to start thinking through is what are the roles for people who are going to have the most contact with refugees? How are they going to support the refugees' transition to life in Japan and how are they going to coordinate their activities?



We need to coordinate the activities of local governments, NPOs, and community organizations.

Currently, there are a lot of actors and information to deal with for refugees who come to Japan.

Refugees need to have a clear idea of where to go and who will help them with specific issues.

The national government needs to take the lead in helping actors at the local level, such as NGOs, community organizations and local governments, get better organized in terms of streamlining the delivery of care to refugees.

Related to this is the need for a proper balance between professional and volunteer staff as this will reflect the cooperation of all relevant actors at the local level who are involved in providing care for refugees.

Refugee policy in Japan

I would also like to make a couple points about how refugee policy is made and issues related to the improvement of refugee policy at the national level. Policy-makers who define and regulate refugee policy in Japan need to be more flexible.

Japan has a history of accepting refugees and hosts many foreign residents, including many Indo-Chinese communities comprised of former refugees. Refugee policy needs to learn from these in terms of learning from the successes and failures in order to be most effective. In Japan, we can begin thinking about how refugee resettlement can be recast as part of a more integrated foreign policy rather than a side issue.

Questions and Answers

Flowers:

What methodology do you think would be most effective in terms of resettling refugees? What role do you see for refugees in the larger context of multicultural diversity? How do you get the support of the local community? Are there specific things that can be done by the local government to get support from the local community? What is the central aspect of local integration for refugees?



Alkhal:

Japan has 30 years of experience with refugees, including Indo-Chinese residents—many of whom are former refugees. Other than Refugee Head Quarters, there are a lot of NGOs which have gained experience, in many fields.

We are talking about 30 Burmese refugees and they are from a specific group—we have to look at

it from the perspective of dealing with one group of refugees as opposed to several. In many ways, it makes the jobs and logistics of the government a lot easier as the preparation for a single group is not as time-consuming and less difficult.

My recommendation is that we don't send them off faraway from the resident expatriate community, but send them to that community. We should keep them somewhere in the neighborhood of Shinjuku or surrounding parts of Tokyo. This is just my opinion, but I think that the final decisions should be made by the refugees. Although the group is small, their background may vary so we need to provide options.

Carrey:

An essential element for successful refugee resettlement is financial self-sufficiency. Many other things would flow from that. Mental health, a rich home-life home, etc. stem from being part of the economic fabric in the local community.

The diversity amongst the actors who participate in the refugee resettlement process is critical for their success as well as the coordination of those actors. In the US, there are local refugee forums that make sure organizations are not duplicating each others' efforts. This is critical as time and resources are limited. Whatever resources are available tend to be used on an ongoing

basis. We must also recognize that the process takes longer than six months. Refugees require most care in the beginning, but we must look at the process of refugee resettlement over the long term as it takes years.

Ford:

If refugees want to go to the enclaves or the larger established communities of their fellow nationals, I have no problem with that. The community will be a source of strength for them, as well as a source of information, jobs, and so on. For example, if newly arrived Burmese refugees want to settle in Shinjuku, then I would encourage them to consult the Burmese already living there.

It's a three year project--that is awfully short. I have seen a survey, done in New York, measuring income, which states that it takes at least 10 years for foreign communities to achieve economic parity with native-born Americans. Imagine that we are talking about people with no language skills or knowledge of the local environment. To expect success, in three years, I am not sure what that means. That would be my comment.

Ishikawa:

Case management is the key to successful resettlement. The training is conducted in a camp format. However, consistent case management is critical in order to avoid generating gaps when they resettle in a local community.

It is important for Japanese people to promote more exchange with refugees by referring to places like Shinjuku ward where people from over 100 countries reside together. Involvement of the local government is also important. The United States federal government provides a wide variety of subsidies. Understanding the perspectives of local governments and support from the national government are necessary in Japan as well.

Seng Bu:

Reflecting on my experience, I found that not understanding Japanese was the biggest obstacle to integration until I got used to life here.



We hope that the Karen community, refugee communities like ourselves in Japan as well as NGOs and the governments can work together to provide the support.

Some people wish to live in a city where refugee communities do not exist or a local area, for example a country side similar to their hometown. Support for such cases should be provided too.

Flowers:

Do you have any programs to fight against bias and discrimination?



Ford:

We settle the vast majority of our refugees in the Baltimore and Washington area, which is a fairly cosmopolitan area. I have not heard of systemic discrimination against refugees. Refugees tend to be supported by the local city groups or in most cases congregation churches.

Carrey:

I would like to comment from a national perspective. There are some communities such as states that border Mexico, with growing anti-immigrant sentiment. We do outreach public education to explain the issues of refugees; sometimes we work with the media, in civic institutions, sometimes in police forces with people who are former refugees to express their points of view--that they tend to fear the police force, and the society that they came from.

Ford:

We had had trouble in the schools though. Bullying in American schools between American-born and children from refugee families has occurred. We've had community meetings with the police, etc. Everyone is involved. This is not just a problem in the United States.

Flowers:

What kind of work does Ms. Sen Bu do for a living?

Seng Bu:

This is the 18th year since I first arrived at Japan. My husband has been working in a Korean BBQ restaurant since he came to Japan, so we opened a Korean BBQ restaurant 2 years ago and currently run it together.

Flowers:

What kind of role can we, as ordinary citizens, play?

Ishikawa:

The more resettlement of refugees we have, the more likely that refugees are living near you. Many refugees greet and talk to you because they try hard to be integrated into the community. But some are disappointed because they are ignored or surprised by the people they talked to. It is very important to initiate the first step with basic communication such as greetings.

Flowers:

Are there any future plans to have African refugees incorporated into the proposed resettlement plan? Can you clarify the recognition criteria?

Alkhal:

If the number of Africans determined as refugees increase, there is a possibility that Africans will be accepted in the resettlement program.

We are hoping that the resettlement program will become a regular program. Hopefully, after accepting refugees from Asia, this will gradually spread. It would be best if we could accept 100 people each year as a primary target, and later on reach up to 500 per year.

Flowers:

What kind of assistance can be offered for refugees with psychological problems? How do we integrate these refugees into the local host-community?

Carrey:

Providing psychological and social support is crucial. We have been advising the government about the importance of psychosocial therapy. We are hoping that this will spread throughout the United States.

When we did an art therapy program, many of the kids who participated did better in school, and were able to communicate with other kids better. We are surprised to see profound results so quickly. Hopefully, we can introduce this to Japan.



Flowers:

How were the refugees resettling in Japan chosen?

Alkhal:

UNCHR and national governments have separate criteria for accepting refugees. Many governments have a 'wishlist' regarding the refugees they want to accept. In the Japanese resettlement program, we had discussed specific criteria with the Cabinet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Justice for a year and a half.



Flowers:

Why did Mrs. Seng Bu choose Japan?

Seng Bu:

When I fled from Burma, I was exposed to danger. Initially, I was not able to choose which country I could resettle in. First, I went to Thailand, our neighboring country but could not stay there for

long. Then I went to Germany because my relatives were there. But I felt very lonely without friends and family; and I had strong enthusiasm for democratic activity. That is why I came to Japan.

For many others, they cannot choose a country and rush to whatever their broker introduced them.

Flowers:

It seems that some of you have expressed some frustration about a lack of sufficient information on the reality of these issues. How important is transparency in order to make the process work?

Ishikawa:

It is unfortunate that the discussion for this third country resettlement program was not an open forum. However, as an NGO, all we can say about this is that the government did not provide us with sufficient information. We should have demanded for that the government be more informed. We want to make efforts to open the discussion as the program kicks off soon.



Closing Remarks

Prof. Hiroshi Homma

Senior Advisor, Japan Association for Refugees and Professor Emeritus, Hosei University



Civil society's interest into refugee issues

I am very pleased to see so many people attending this symposium today. This gives me hope and encouragement.

I used to feel that people's interest in refugee issues was very low at the local level, but I suppose that I was mistaken. I have come to realize that many Japanese are interested in refugee issues but just do not know how to translate this into action.

When Indo-Chinese refugees came to Japan in 1975, it was the local volunteers who responded first, even before the Japanese government did anything.

For many years, Japan has had the potential to receive refugees but this has never been developed a comprehensive system or sustained effort.

Refugee assistance in future

In Japan, conventional thinking has framed the refugee issue as one that affects only the national government. The question that is now being asked by many people is how local governments and communities can be proactively involved in refugee reception.

While we consider refugee reception at the local level, we also need to face the reality that there are states in Asia where human rights are violated.

The United States and Japan have different social structures. With this in our mind, we shall refer to policies in other states and focus on creating a refugee protection system appropriate for Japan.

We should also not forget that other Asian countries are paying attention to the ways in which refugee protection is established in Japan.

References

Presentation Materials

Dr. Martin Ford

“Building Effective Partnerships for Refugees: An Overview of Resettlement in the State of Maryland”

Prof. Yasushi Iguchi

“Outlook for Refugee reception through ‘Third Country Resettlement’: Roles of the State, Region, and Local Governments”

Mr. Daniel Alkhal

“Mandate Function of UNHCR to Seek Durable Solutions”

Mr. Robert Carey

“From Harm to Home: US Programs”

Ms. Eri Ishikawa

“Self-sufficiency for Refugees: From the Perspective of a Japanese NGO”

Refugee Reception in the United States and Japan

Refugee Resettlement in the US

Japan’s Refugee System and Resettlement

Organization Overview

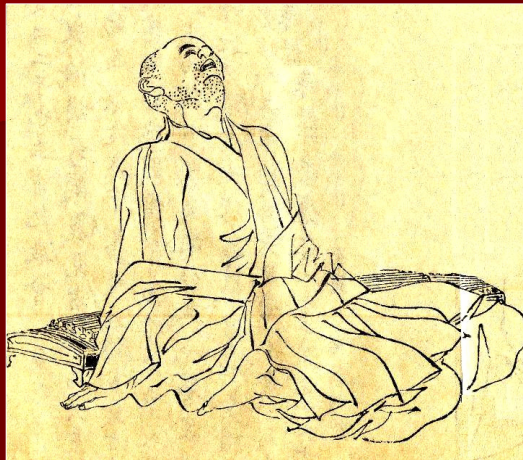
International Rescue Committee (IRC)

Japan Association for Refugees (JAR)

Dr. Martin Ford
Associate Director, Maryland Office for Refugees and Asylees
Department of Human Resources

Building Effective Partnerships for Refugees

An Overview of Resettlement in
the State of Maryland



Kamo no Ch?mei (by Kikuchi Yosai, c.1155–1216)

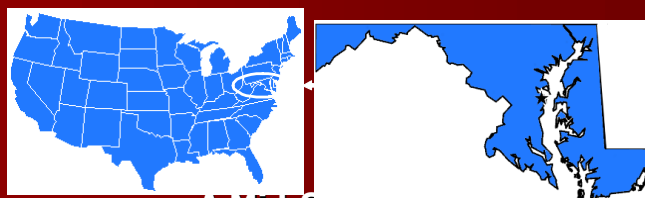
Refugee Resettlement in the U.S.

- Public funding from the Federal Government.
- Administered through State Government Agencies
- Non-profit resettlement agencies raise private funds and recruit volunteers.

Refugee Resettlement A Public-Private Partnership

- MORA is funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement to administer 'adjustment services' for refugees.
- MORA works in partnership with private, non-profit agencies who provide direct services.

Maryland: "America in Miniature"



A Mid-Sized State:

19th in population
5.7 million people
13% foreign-born

National VOLAGs

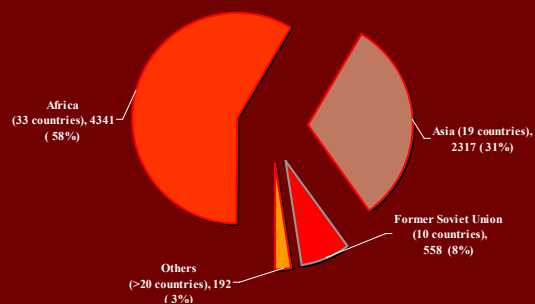


Refugees Resettled in Maryland

FY 05 – FY 09

Total resettled in five years = 7,408

Total number of countries of origin = 83



Source: MORA
Prepared by: MORA

One-Stop Resettlement

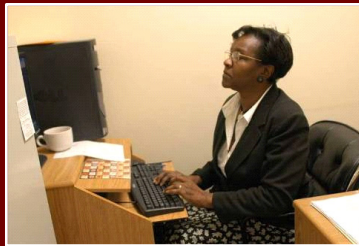


The Baltimore Resettlement Center founded in 1998

BRC Resettlement Partners

- Baltimore City Community College
- Baltimore City Dept. of Social Services
- Baltimore Medical Systems
- International Rescue Committee
- Lutheran Social Services
- Americorps
- American Red Cross
- Jewish Family Services
- Open Society Institute
- Occasional Others

Department of Social Services



- Food Stamps
- Medical Assistance
- Cash Assistance

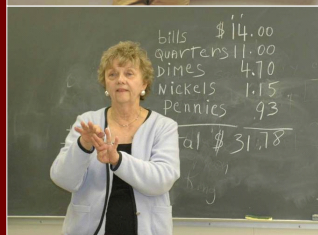
Orientation and the Family Self-Sufficiency Plan



Language Is Key



- Intensive
- Conversational
- Practical
- Workplace Oriented
- Professional



Volunteers Play Important Role



Homebound Women Learn Language

Employment Services: Welcome to the American "World of Work"



Orientation Must Be Two-Way



Not All Are Employable



Not All Are Healthy



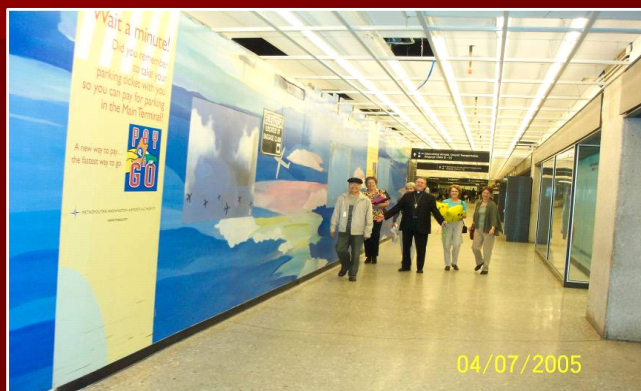
Community Support Is Essential



Dalai Lama Thanks Swiss



Reception & Placement



R&P First Things First



- Initial Housing
- Essential Furnishings
- Food or Food Allowance
- Seasonal Clothing

Priorities



Basic Needs Must
Be Met First



Social Security Administration



School Enrollment



Resettlement Plan



Communication with Japanese Colleagues is Sincerely Welcomed

Contact

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Asylees

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<http://www.dhr.state.md.us/mora>

Prof. Yasushi Iguchi
Professor, School of Economics, Kwansei Gakuin University

**Outlook for Refugee reception
through “Third Country
Resettlement”
— Roles of the State, Region and
Local Governments —**

3rd July 2010

International Symposium

“Japan's Refugee Reception System in Transition and Local Community”

At Komaba Campus, University of Tokyo

Yasushi Iguchi

Kwansei Gakuin University

Director of the Declining Birthrate and Economics Research Center

Advisor to the Congress of Municipalities with High Density of Foreign
Inhabitants

1 Introduction
Accepting Resettlement of Refugees

Japan had discussions on refugee reception that distinguished it from other policies towards resident foreigners.

The background to this was a concern that there might be a large influx of asylum seekers triggered by the information that the state had eased its refugee reception standards in East Asia.

Considering the situation in Europe, there was increasing concern that the refugee reception program may be misused by refugees based on economic reasons separate from political or religious persecution.

The above reasons have for a long time limited the number of recognized refugees to a very small number apart from the 11,000 Indo-Chinese refugees as well as supporting measures for asylum seekers.

However, in parallel with recent debate over reform of policies toward resident foreigners and the nation's immigration control policy, is the move to strengthen the integrated policy at the regional and local authorities' level (this is referred to as "Foreign Residents Measures" by the Cabinet Office, and "Multi-cultural Policy" by relevant local authorities"). As a result of this development, there exists the possibility to promote sustainable efforts to improve integration. This can be done at the regional and local levels by building a common infrastructure that provides a framework for all policies towards foreign residents.

Within the international community, our commitment to sharing the burden of refugee protection has been questioned.

However, there is increasing awareness about the human rights abuses Myanmar, one of Japan's Asian neighbours.

- Therefore it is critical for the regional and local authorities to have strategies that outline how to realize an Asia without human rights violations and develop measures which promote its sustainable effort in both the refugees themselves who come from the region and within the resettlement countries.
- Regional and local authorities can learn many lessons from the relationship between the national and local governments greater cooperation on this issue. In this context, it is important for regional and local governments to pay more attention to the experiences and issues surrounding refugee reception.
- Therefore, we shall think about the coming challenges by focusing on the fact that ongoing reform of policy towards resident foreigners leads to the general improvement of necessary infrastructure and reception mechanisms for refugee reception.

2 Facts Concerning and Challenges of Refugee Reception in Japan

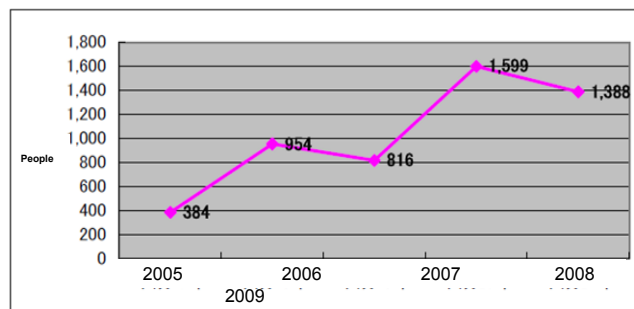
Japan started accepting Indochinese refugees in 1979, and acceded the Refugee Convention (1951) and Protocol (1967) in 1981.

Political refugees were one of the two main categories of refugee that Japan accepted based on the UN resolution, and the number of refugees settled in Japan until 2006 (with the complete end of the program) totaling almost 11,000 including family members.

The second type of refugees Japan accepted were convention refugees, with individual cases being recognized under the rubric of the Immigration Control Act. During the examination, those without a visa are not allowed to work and financial support from the government is limited to 4 months. The burden on the asylum seekers is great and the number of recognized refugees remained in the 2 digits every year (Diagrams 1, 2).

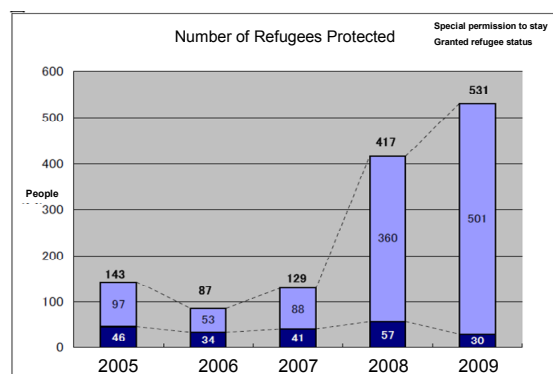
- It is significant that increased awareness of political repression in Myanmar led to a shift in Japanese public opinion in 2005 attributed to [the revision of the Act which separates the humanitarian status procedure from the forced deportation procedure](#). As a result of that, the number of those who can be employed with resident status of “special activity” on the basis of humanitarian circumstances has rapidly increased (Diagram 2).
- Then, in a cabinet decision on December 2009, as a measure to address refugee issues in Asia, a decision was made to start a pilot program for refugee reception through [third country resettlement](#) from FY2011.
- Third country resettlement here refers to moving refugees under temporary protection, i.e. in a refugee camp from a country of asylum to a third country which has agreed to accept them.

Diagram 1 Number of Asylum Applications



Note) For 2009, there were applicants from 47 countries. The major countries of origin were Myanmar (568), Sri Lanka (234), Turkey (94), Pakistan (92), and India (59).

Source: Immigration Control Bureau, Ministry of Justice



Note) There were eight countries of origin for recognized refugees in 2009. Among these the major refugee-producing countries were Myanmar (18) as well as Iran and Afghanistan (3 people each). Japan provided protection for individuals from nineteen refugee-producing countries. Of which, Myanmar accounts for approximately 90 percent with 478 people.

Source: Immigration Control Bureau, Ministry of Justice

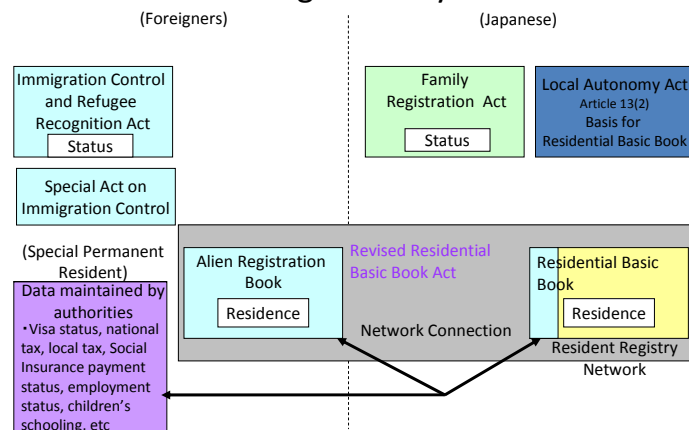
- Those refugees will have the right to protection or long term stay in their final destination. Such reception has been recommended by UNHCR as part of an effort towards taking a more pro-active role in the burden sharing of providing aid to refugee.
- In Japan, the discussion about refugee reception has traditionally been separated from that of policy towards resident foreigners. However it is critical for integrating communities to be equipped with a mechanism that enables them to provide continuous support in addition to the pre-existing reception support provided by the state in order to promote the smooth integration of refugees into Japanese society. The development of infrastructure which guarantees opportunities for Japanese language acquisition in particular, can play a vital role in the improvement of future refugee reception.

3 Current Regulation of Japan's Resident Foreigners

In Japan, we have seen significant settlement of foreigners at the regional and local levels and face increased migration from East Asia generally as global economic integration continues. On the other hand, we have had to face the reality that the change has not been adequately addressed in national policy regulating the integration of foreign residents.

- Yet, consistent lobbying of the local governments represented by the Congress of Municipalities with High Density of Foreign Inhabitants (see the exhibit) have attributed to regulatory reforms beginning in 2006. These changes led to the subsequent revision of the Immigration Control and Residential Basic Book Acts, etc in 2009. These changes have been a starting point for building the infrastructure necessary to guarantee that the rights of and obligations to foreign residents will be upheld at the regional level.

Diagram : Image of the New Resident Management System



- Despite the evident need for policy that works to integrate refugees more effectively, national policy towards foreign residents has tended to emphasize [anti-terrorism and anti-crime measures](#).

It is only very recently that the government came to pay attention to the infrastructure needed to integrate foreign residents.

Under the administration of the Democratic Party of Japan which took the office in September 2009, [no clear intention in policy regulating foreign residents has been articulated](#) and [the debate over foreign residents' participation in local elections has divided public opinion](#). In this sense, the current administration has not maintained a consistent position of further developing the infrastructure needed to integrate refugees and other resident foreigners. This has created unnecessary problems for many foreign residents.

- In the EU, the commitment to regulating foreign residents has been strengthened as one of its main pillars, "[Social Integration Policy](#)" (this is referred to as "Foreign Residents Measures" by the Cabinet Office, and "Multi-cultural Policy" by relevant local authorities") together with "[Immigration Control Policy](#)." However, Japan has not yet adequately established any sort of "Social Integration Policy".

However, due to the economic crisis in Autumn 2008, policies that worked against the integration of foreign workers and children were enhanced as emergency measures. The immediate and critical challenge resulting from this is whether or not these measures [can be transformed into a durable mechanism to facilitate integration](#).

[As of July 2010, the Congress of Municipalities with High Density of Foreign Inhabitants has set ensuring access to Japanese language education for foreigners as its most significant policy issue and we are trying to lobby the national government in support of this platform. In our appeal, a system which ensures access to Japanese language education for foreign residents as our "integration language" in order to ensure "respect of the rights and execution of the obligation" of foreigners at the regional level.](#)

Such series of movements may lead to development of new collaboration between the national "[refugee policy](#)" and the local "[social integration policy](#)" which have had minimal if any overlap.

4 The Government's Policy on Refugee Reception to date

(1) Lessons from accepting Indo-Chinese refugees

As stated above, the Japanese government had maintained a very strict policy of refugee reception. However, from 1979 to 2006, about 11,000 Indo-Chinese refugees were accepted.

In order to receive those refugees, the Japanese government built [Resettlement Promotion Centers in Himeji, Hyogo and Yamato, Kanagawa](#), as well as the [Reception Center in Omura, Nagasaki](#), in addition to the [International Refugee Assistance Center in Shinagawa, Tokyo](#). All of these facilities were used to administer Japanese language and vocational training for 6 months as well as provided refugee counselors for refugees settling in nearby communities. [The International Refugee Assistance Center continued family unification support, but was closed in March 2006.](#)

The problem with the reception of Indo-Chinese refugees into Japanese communities was that the 6 months intensive training in a facility could not guarantee subsequent self-sufficient lifestyles for refugees. The Japanese language training might have provided the refugees with minimum skills required for daily life. However, in most cases they could not acquire enough Japanese required for employment. It is discouraging to point out that the local communities where these refugees settled had provided continuous and effective support to improve their Japanese skills upon completion of the national support program

Considering the difficulty of Japanese language, vocational training based on the six month Japanese language training could only allow for many of the Indo-Chinese refugees to get low-skill and low-pay jobs. Based on a survey, the support provided by refugee counselors did not provide significant help.

For refugee children, whether or not they graduated from high school made a big difference. Those who were unable to graduate from high school are often forced into unstable situations for the rest of their lives. Without regional support for children of refugees, those growing up in Japan will be forced to the bottom of the Japanese society.

There are some cases in which family unification exacerbated the situation. It was not easy for elderly family members who arrived in Japan to learn a difficult language like Japanese. Because of their insufficient language skills, more and more became dependent on social welfare after being unemployed for a long time or faced significant health issues and lost their jobs as a result. Some faced discrimination and suffered from mental issues.

Based on those, it seems critical that refugee reception have an infrastructure which enables continuous support through burden-sharing and collaboration between the national and regional/local governments.

(2) Lessons learnt from accepting Japanese orphans left in China

Other than the refugee reception practice, we should focus on additional policies designed to resettle resident foreigners promoted by the government.

From 1981 to 2006, the Japanese government had over 22,000 Japanese orphans and their Chinese families permanently resettled in Japan. The number of this group far exceeds that of the Indo-Chinese refugees. The number of the orphans alone is about 2,500 but their spouses and under-age children also returned to Japan at the national expenditure. The number of family members brought over to Japan was 4 to 5 times more than those who came to Japan at the national expenditure.

- Japanese language and lifestyle training was provided after their return for the initial 6 months at the Returnee Settlement Promotion Center in Saitama and Osaka prefectures. After that, they went through 8 months training at Chinese Returnee Self-Support Centers located in major 12 cities nationwide.

However most of those orphans were over the age of 40 at the time of return and their Japanese language ability did not go beyond basic daily conversation.

As a result, it is said that most of the orphans could work at the so called “3-K work places” (*kitanai* or dirty, *kitsui* or tough, and *kiken* or dangerous). Unstable and chronic unemployment increased after retirement age. The ratio of orphan household on social aid reached 60 percent.

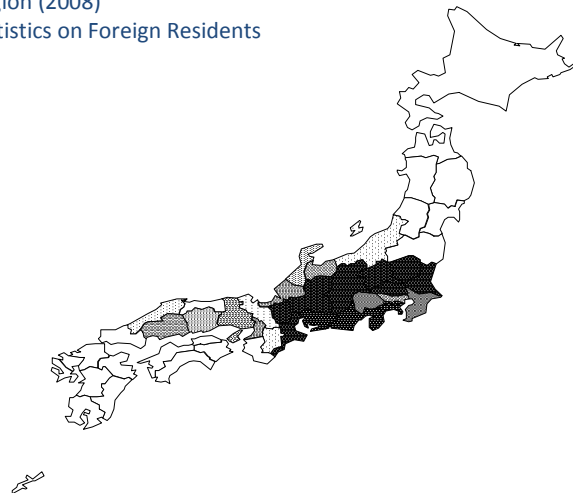
As such, the higher the age of those who resettled made it extremely difficult for them to integrate into their new communities, despite enhancement of the national support at the time of reception. In the end, many of them were forced into the situation where they had to depend on social aid.

5 Priority Issues: Building an Infrastructure and Continuous Support for Japanese Language

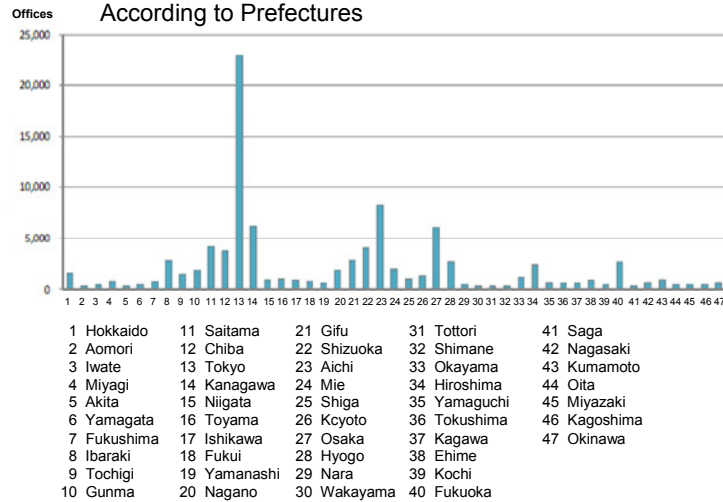
- According to alien registration figures for 2008, there are 2,210,000 foreign residents in Japan. About 40,000 people every year acquire permanent resident status and the number totals to 91,000 including those who with special resident status. It is also assumed that foreigners working in the country amount to 990,000 people excluding those based on special resident status. (see table)
- In these circumstances, cities with higher concentrations of foreigners, mainly South American Japanese descendants, formed the Congress of Cities with High Density of Foreign Inhabitants, and increased their appeal efforts to reform policy towards resident foreigners at all levels.

Brazilians tend to concentrate in the Northern Kanto Region/ Chubu Region (2008)

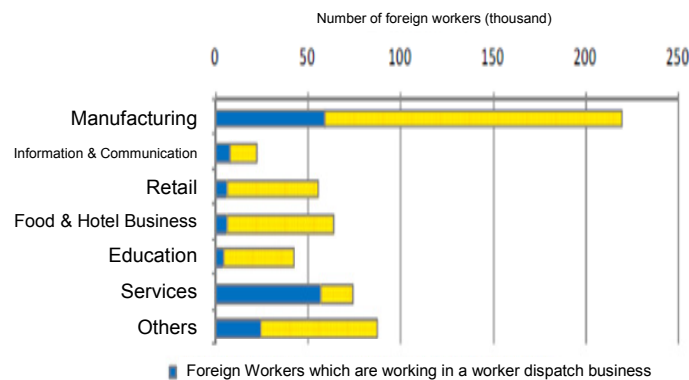
Statistics on Foreign Residents



The Number of Offices Hiring Foreign Residents
According to Prefectures



The Types of Industries which Foreign Residents work in



- Since 2010, a vision for a new system has been developing with an assumption that the widening of access to the Japanese language education will improve the general infrastructure is the most important challenge, and is leading to the rebirth of local communities impacted by the world economic crisis.
- In this effort, “the Congress of Municipalities with High Density of Foreign Inhabitants “ (Governors’ meeting) scheduled for this November will present its new vision. Included in this proposal is a focus on building an infrastructure with reference to lessons in Europe for various social integration policies. It aims to realize a system in which national and local governments cooperate and share responsibilities.

The elements of this proposal include:

- 1) Setting a standard for Japanese language skills
- 2) Setting up a Japanese language proficiency test and Japanese language certificate systems
- 3) Implementation of certificate standards for Japanese language teachers and schools
- 4) Setting standard courses and standard class duration for Japanese language education
- 5) Setting the scope for measuring the skill of participants involved in Japanese education
- 6) Implementation of a class guidance system based on the Immigration Act
- 7) Implementation of a Japanese language class participation data registration system
- 8) Implementation of corporate class support obligation under the class guidance
- 9) Implementation of Orientation Classes
- 19) Establishment of special funding for Japanese language classes for foreigners as a systematic package has been considered.

- With development of these aspects of an infrastructure, it is necessary to realize the sustainable support system for foreign residents in regions after identifying the responsibilities and cooperation between the national and local governments in a regional context.
- For example, the internationalization vision by Toyota city proposed that the foreign residents and Toyota city sign the "Toyota Citizen Agreement" and identify mutual rights and obligations while promoting planned and sustainable support for foreign residents. Therefore, NPO's will join the effort of the national and local governments to provide individual support for foreign residents, while those foreign residents will be asked to actively participate.
- For this, resources like multi-cultural managers being developed by Aichi and Gunma prefectures and international associations at local authorities shall not be only used for supporting South American Japanese descendents, but also to protect rights of the vocational trainers or support resettlement of refugees. Utilization of those resources should be discussed in depth so that the development and certification of resources will be promoted in order to create sustainable support.
- I hope that the mechanism which ensures access to Japanese language education required for living, schooling and employment will be developed as a national measure, and that national and local governments as well as NPO's will cooperate in building a system to promote such programs, so that new foundations for the smooth reception of resettling refugees will develop in all regions of Japan.

6 Conclusion

- Work by cities who had made efforts in vitalizing the regional business community through accepting so-called “new comer” foreigners largely contributes to the recent initiatives in policy towards foreign residents.
- However, the Congress of Municipalities with High Density of Foreign Inhabitants has strengthened initiatives and requests for national government to expand its assistance to Japanese descendents from South America. The rapid increase of technical interns in some regions has been the impetus of these increased demands on the government. It should be noted that the current government response to these pressures have not specified any role for regional or local efforts in receiving refugees.
- However, not only those cities but also other cities who have accepted a number of foreigners have started to build infrastructure for Japanese language education in terms of establishing facilities, personnel and learning materials.
Looking at the current standards for Japanese proficiency, there is significant need for reform so that the Japanese government provides a solid foundation of systematic financial and personnel support which allows foreigners to learn Japanese with continuous support at the regional/local levels.
- I really hope that our country will improve social integration policy and overcome the faults and inadequacies of the pre-existing refugee resettlement mechanism. Doing this will allow our country to share a greater role in the resettlement of refugees, comparable with other first world countries.
- To that end, I expect that the development of infrastructure for Japanese language education which allows for employment and schooling through cooperation between the national, regional and local authorities will be considered as a high priority by the national government.
- Through implementation of new policies towards resident foreigners and promotion of refugee policies at the regional and local levels, it is important that this be more than an instrumental expansion of Japan’s role in accepting refugees.
- It will help us to raise awareness about the need to protect human rights in Asia and to realize a sustainable effort through collaboration between the state and local authorities, to ensure that foreigners including refugees will not be pushed to the margins of society.

Main Resources

The Congress of Municipalities with High Density of Foreign Inhabitants (2009) “Houkokusho Ohta 2009 Tabunka kyosei shakai wo mezashite”

Ministry of Justice (2010) “Heisei 21-nen ni okeru nannmin nitenishasuu ni tsuite”

International Organization for Migration, (2005) “Nihon ni okeru vietnam nanmin teijusha (josei) ni tsuite no tekiou chousa”

Eri Ishikawa (2009) “Nanmin seisaku no suii – NGO kara mita junen” ‘Imin Seisaku Kenkyu’ No.1 pp55-70

Yasushi Iguchi (2009) “Kaisei nyukanhou / jukihou to gaikokujin seisaku no tenbou” ‘Jurists’ No.138 pp80-84

Yasushi Iguchi (2009) “Hirakareta nihon eno seido sekkei – higashi ajia keizai togo to junkan imin kousou” ‘Gaiko Forum’ No. 250 pp52-57

Yasushi Iguchi (2007) “Ugoki hajimeta gaikokujin seisaku no kaikaku – kinkyu no taiou kara seiki no kousou hhe” edited by Yuhikaku ‘Jurists’ No.13502008.2.15 pp2-14 et al.

Toyota-shi (2010) “Toyota Nihongo gakushu system guideline” (published online)

Toyota-shi (2007) “Toyota-shi Kokusaika Yushikisha Kaigi Hokusho” (published online)

Mr. Daniel Alkhal
Senior Protection Officer, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Representation in Japan

Mandate Function of UNHCR
to Seek Durable Solutions

3 July 2010
UNHCR Tokyo
Daniel Alkhal, Senior Protection Officer

Mandate Function of UNHCR
to Seek Durable Solutions
Comprehensive Approach



There is no hierarchy of durable solutions.

Basic Principles

- Resettlement is not a refugee's 'right' but seeking durable solutions for refugees is UNHCR's statutory responsibility
- Resettlement is not an obligation of State (resettlement places are limited / access to resettlement is limited)
- Resettlement criteria and procedures should be applied in a consistent and transparent manner
- Identification and eligibility are critical factors (UNHCR has a central role in the process)

Objectives of Resettlement

- To save/rescue individuals/families with specific protection needs
- To provide a solution for refugees in the absence of or in parallel with other durable solutions
- As an element of burden/responsibility-sharing
- To create protection dividends for refugees who are not going to be resettled

Stages in the Resettlement Process

1. Identification of refugee(s) in need of resettlement consideration
2. Assessment of eligibility / need for resettlement: refugee claim, resettlement criteria (e.g. women-at-risk), viability of other solutions, continued need for protection
3. Prepare documentation and RRF (consider priority of submission)
4. Submission decision (quality assurance / oversight / responsible officer / regional hubs)

Stages in the Resettlement Process

5. Submission of RRF to resettlement country (consider resettlement country criteria, dossier / in-country selection)
6. Decision of resettlement country (accepted / declined / deferred)
7. Pre-departure processing (counselling / medicals) and travel
8. Reception and integration in the resettlement country

Mr. Robert Carey
Vice President, Resettlement and Migration Policy
The International Rescue Committee (IRC)

From Harm to Home

FROM HARM TO HOME **US PROGRAMS**

Robert Carey, Vice President
Resettlement and Migration Policy
International Rescue Committee

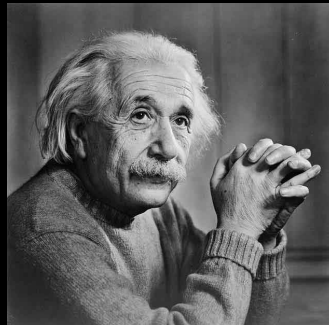
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From Harm to Home

*"Any intelligent fool can
make things bigger,
more complex, and
more violent.
It takes a touch of
genius — and a lot of
courage — to move in
the opposite direction."*

- Albert Einstein



2



From Harm to Home

- 1940 – Varian Fry
- 1956 – Hungarian Revolution
- 1960 – Cuban crisis
- 1976 - Indochinese
- 1979 – Afghanistan
- 1990's – Balkans
- 1990's – Africa



3



From Harm to Home

IRC Today

Budget = \$300+ million

Staff = 10,000 (97% national)

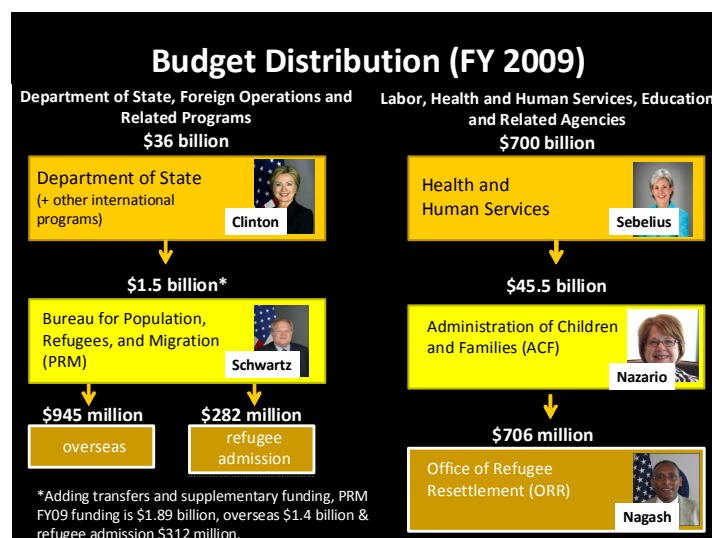
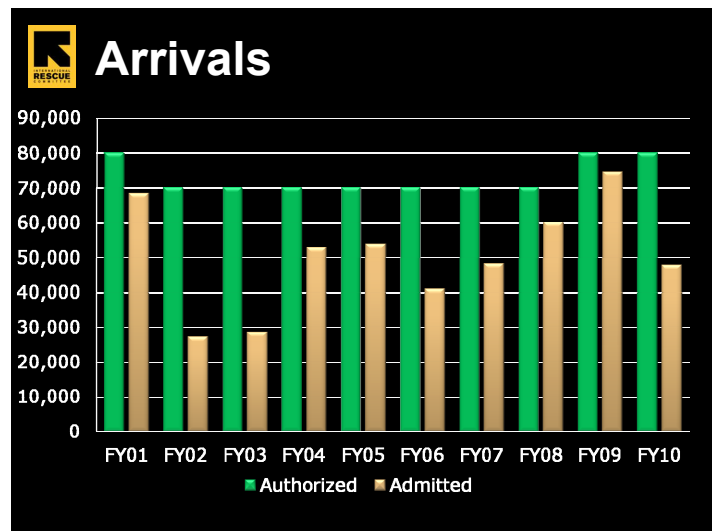
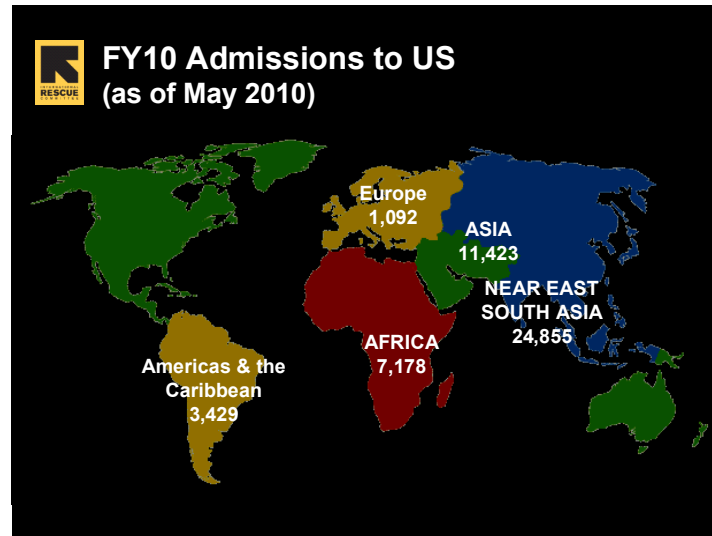
Beneficiaries = over 16 million people




IRC Mission Statement

The International Rescue Committee responds to the world's worst crises and helps people to survive and rebuild their lives. At work in over 40 countries and 22 U.S. cities to restore safety, dignity and hope, the IRC leads the way **from harm to home.**





 FUNDING			
Federal Agency	FY10 Funding	FY11 Administration Request	IRC Recommendation
Office of Refugee Resettlement/ Department of Health and Human Services	\$730.9 million	\$877.6 million	\$988 million
Migration & Refugee Assistance/ State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration	\$1.5 billion (appropriated) \$1.9 billion (available)	\$1.6 billion	\$2.3 billion




**US Programs:
A New Beginning**



Help on Arrival



Tools for Self-Reliance



Integration



Community Engagement

Local Farms and Markets






Community Engagement

Schools






Community Engagement

Micro-Enterprise




 **Community Engagement
Early Employment**



 **Community Engagement
Home Purchases**



 **Goat Farmer**





Single Mother Learns to Read





Government Advocacy



Creating opportunities for refugees to thrive in America





524 staff members



2,700 volunteers

FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING



Ms. Eri Ishikawa
Secretary General, Japan Association for Refugees (JAR)

Self-sufficiency for Refugees: From the Perspective of a Japanese NGO

July 3, 2010

Eri Ishikawa
Secretary General
Japan Association for Refugees (JAR)



JAR (Japan Association for Refugees) - 1

**Our organization
supports refugees
in Japan so they
can lead an
ordinary life
including : finding
gainful
employment and
prosperity**





1. Personal support: for each individual who comes to Japan as a refugee

2. Ongoing research, gathering of information, proposal of policy solutions: for better refugee protection policy



3. Promoting and informing the public about refugees

JAR (Japan Association for Refugees) - 2

- Primary Activities
 - Support for each individual refugee
 - Legal support: Helping with application procedures, preparing documents, coordinating with lawyers.
 - Living support: Providing assistance in acquiring housing, accompanying refugees to hospitals, and providing temporary financial support.
 - PR, Marketing
 - Research, Policy proposals
- Establishment : July, 1999
- Representative : Dr. Yoshiyuki Nakamura
(Board Member of Meiji University)
- FY 2008 Budget : JPY 78,594,995
- Primary funding sources : UNHCR, Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, other private foundations, corporations, and donation from individuals.

1 : Experience of persecution in country of origin

<Examples>

- In a Japanese language class, a refugee from an ethnic minority who was afraid to introduce him or herself to another student from the same country.
- There is a possibility of having distrust towards authorities in general. Therefore, they may be afraid of the Japanese police, government office, and so on.

2 : Being placed in a different culture, religion, and norms

<Examples>

- When asked "What is your name?" a refugee answered "yes."
- When a woman is asked a question, her husband answers for her.

Like the examples given above, there are cases in which miscommunication occurs.

⇒ When facing refugees, it is crucial that we forget about what the dominant culture norms that we are accustomed to.

3. There are many causes of psychological risk

- Trauma from torture in the past
- Being forced to live separately with their family
- Experience of starvation and severe hunger

⇒ These are just a few examples, and there are many people suffering from incidents in the past.



Process of Resettlement

難民支援協会

Arrival

• Initial Support (1 Week)

Entering facility for refugees in the resettlement program + orientation + help with social needs

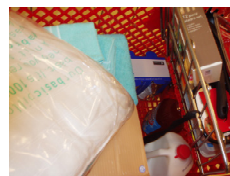


• 6-month Orientation

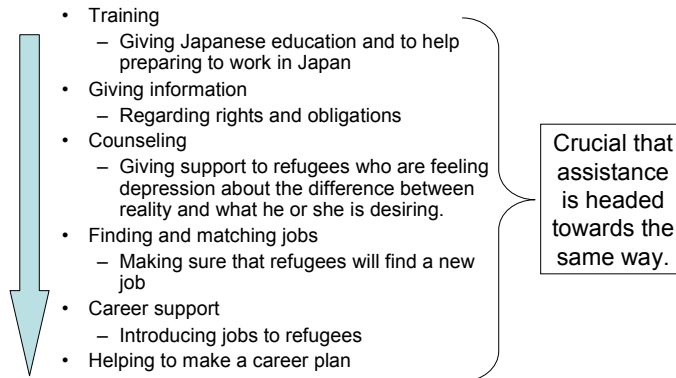
e.g. Japanese language education, helping out with finding jobs and housing, etc

• Settlement in the community

- Self-sufficiency programs
- Continuing support for settling in.
- Advice to local residents by the local authorities
- Cooperation with NGOs supporting refugees



Making Sure that Refugees are Self-sufficient



The Role of NGOs Goals

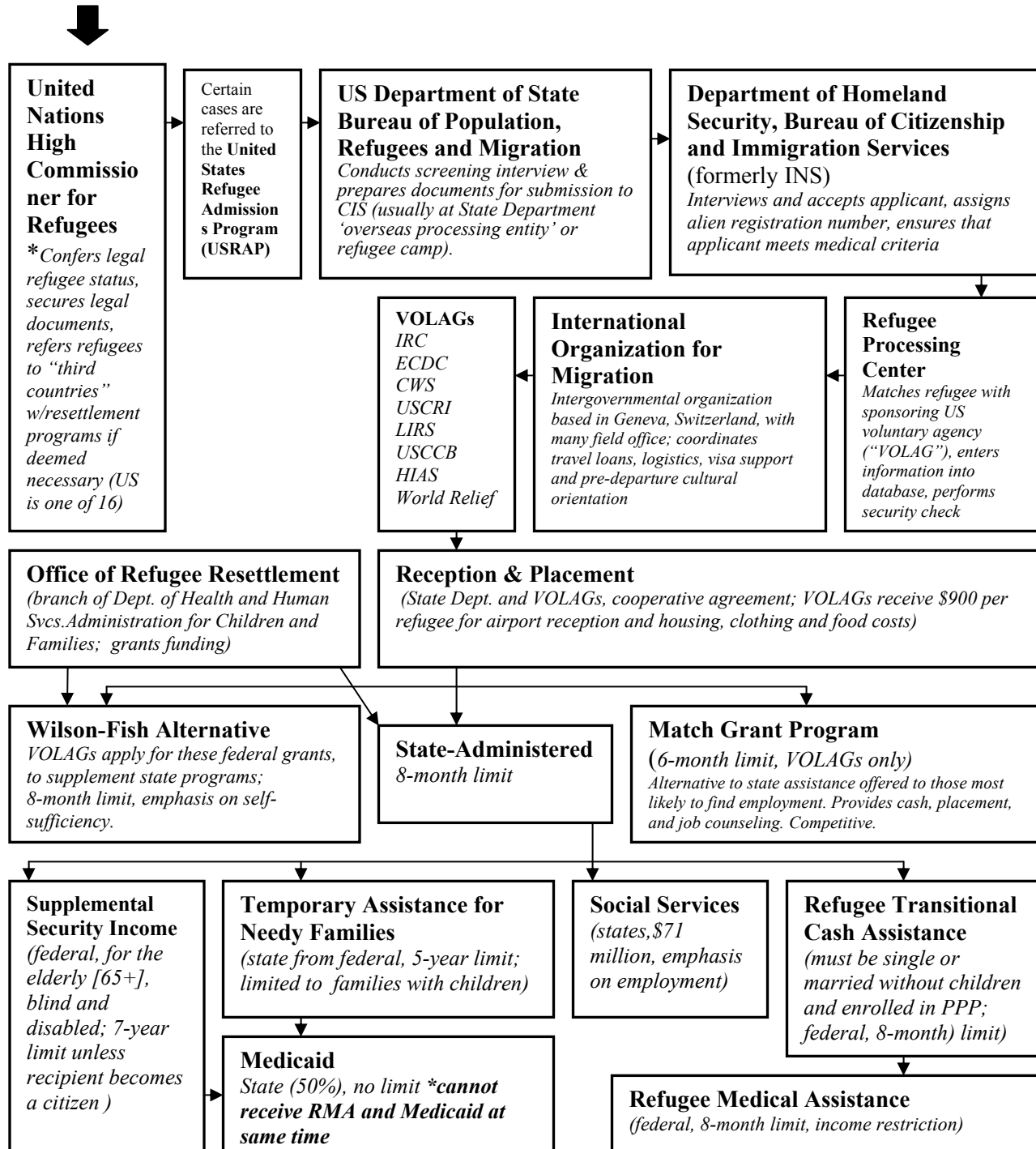
- By assisting refugees one by one, we try to include diverse actors in the assistance of refugees.
- Making sure that there is an open argument, so that the situation of refugees in the resettlement program will be better.
- Cooperating with actors concerned so that the refugee policy in Japan will become better.

Thank you for listening!



Refugee Resettlement in the United States

Resettlement begins when refugees flee their homes to a foreign city or refugee camp and permanent resettlement in or near their home countries is ruled out. Afterward:



Japan's Refugee System and Resettlement

Definition of Refugees

1. Refugees according to the Refugee Convention

The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee to be the following (Article 1A (2)): A refugee is a person who, "...owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it." In order to be classified as a refugee according to the Refugee Convention, he or she must apply for refugee status, in a country which has signed the Refugee Convention. In Japan, the Ministry of Justice is in charge of determining refugee status. Once classified as a refugee, he or she may receive protection.

2. Refugees in a broad sense, Internally Displaced Persons, Subjects of Assistance

These people are not recognized as refugees according to the Refugee Convention, but are in need of protection. Internally displaced persons also need protection. In addition to those categories of assistance-seekers mentioned above, refugees which have returned to their home country may be entitled to protection by UNHCR.

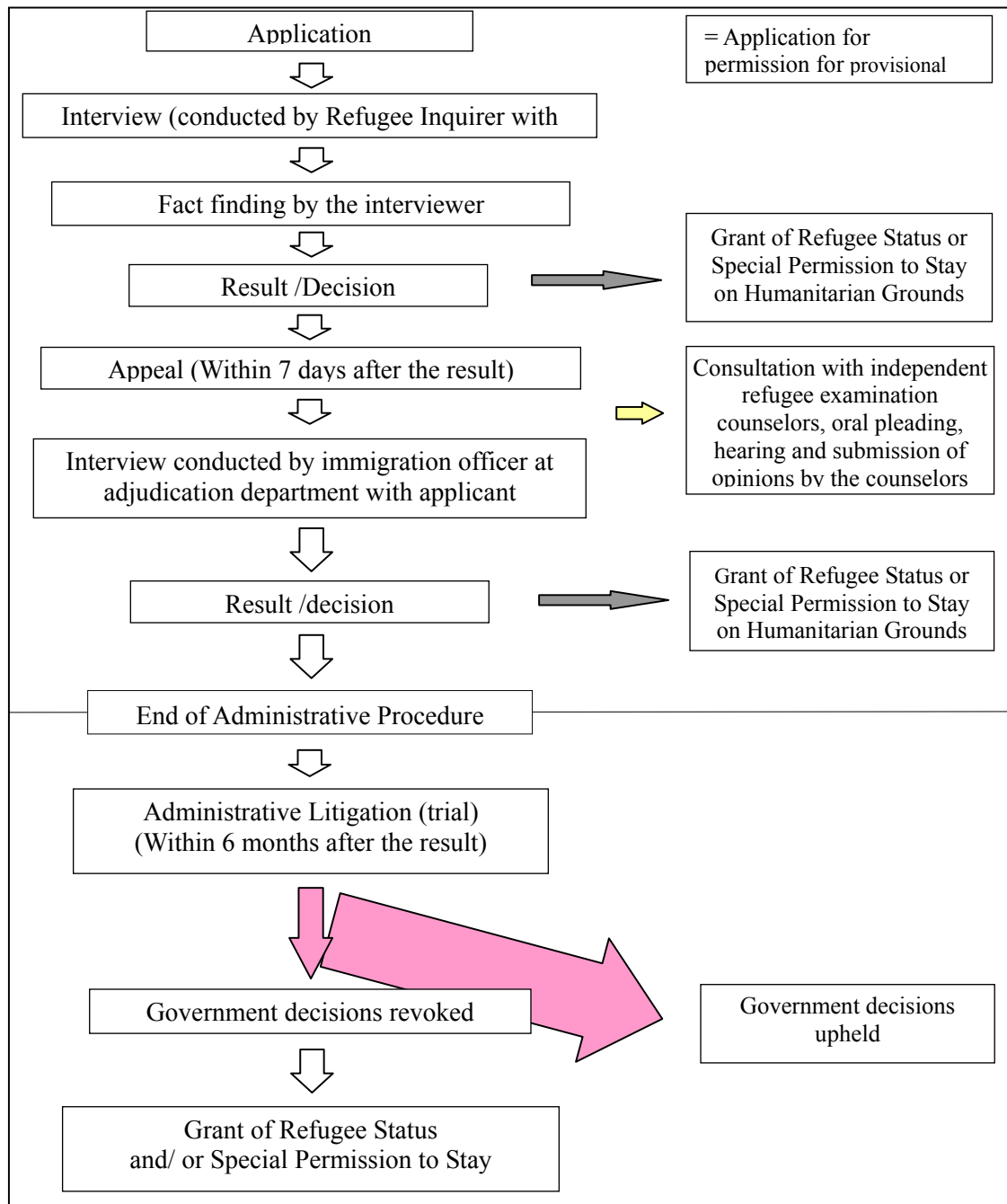
Determining how to give protection and assistance to these people is a major issue.

Japan's Refugee Recognition System

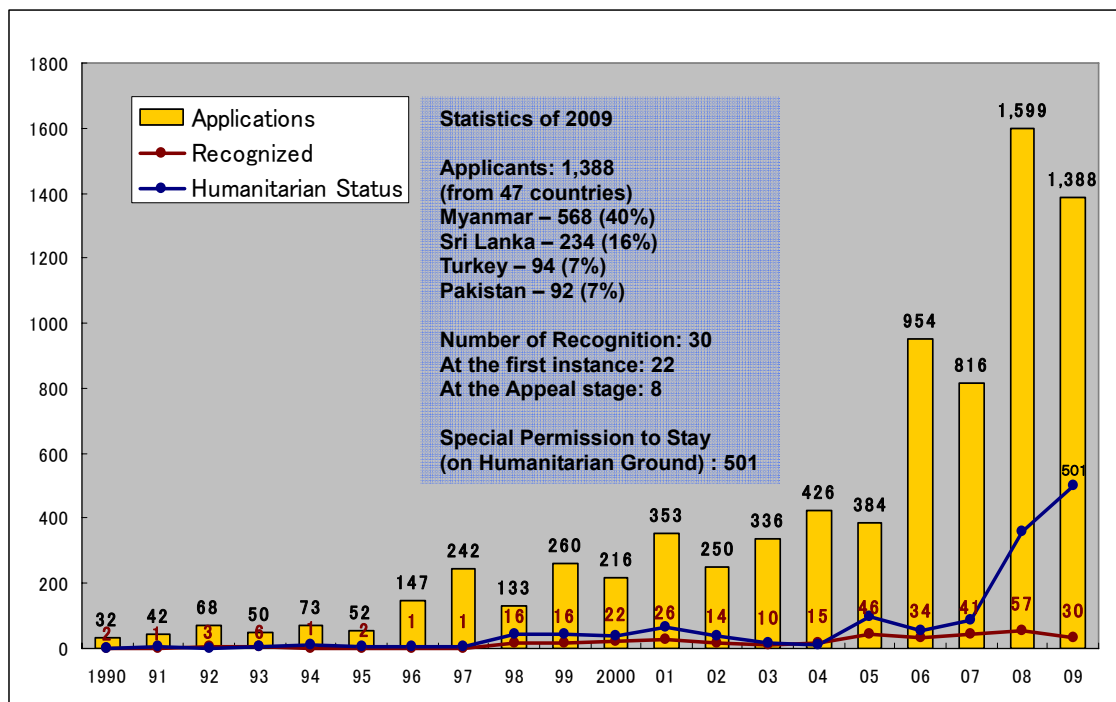
After Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia became politically unstable, refugees started to flood out of the Indochinese peninsula. They first arrived to Japan in 1975 in boats (as boat people) with 9 refugees from Vietnam arriving at a port in Chiba prefecture. At that time, Japan had not acceded to the Refugee Convention, and only allowed temporary residence under the condition that the refugees agree to permanently re-settle at a predetermined location outside Japan. In 1978, the Japanese government decided to accept refugees from Vietnam, and in 1979 July, agreed to accept refugees from the Indo-Chinese peninsula.

In 1981, Japan acceded to the refugee convention, and in 1982, the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act was implemented. The Ministry of Justice examines each application for refugee status, and direct appeals are made to the Minister of Justice by applicants toward that end. If not satisfied with the decision made by the minister, the refugee may fight the decision in court.

Procedure for Recognition of Refugee Status



Refugee Trends in Japan



Accepting Refugees in the Resettlement Program

An overview of resettlement

Resettlement is the selection and transfer of refugees from a country in which they have sought protection to another country which has agreed to admit them. By resettling in a third country which is a member of the Refugee Treaty, a refugee can receive protection from said third country and resettle there.

About the resettlement program in Japan

The pilot resettlement program which Japan is implementing is significantly different from its previous policy of accepting refugees. The Karen families, currently being admitted to Japan, are refugees who have fled from Myanmar to a refugee camp in northern Thailand. Since Japan has been criticized by the international community for its reluctance to accept refugees, this is a pivotal moment for Japan, as well as for refugees arriving to Japan.

The process until integration

First of all, refugees will be assessed. Those refugees who are accepted will receive a 1 month orientation prior to departure. After arrival, they will receive an orientation that focuses on helping them develop language skills, job skills, and so on. Afterwards, admitted refugees will be integrated into the local community.

Organization Overview

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

The International Rescue Committee responds to the world's worst humanitarian crises and helps people to survive and rebuild their lives. Founded in 1933 at the request of Albert Einstein, the IRC offers lifesaving care and life-changing assistance to refugees forced to flee from war or disaster. At work today in over 40 countries and in 22 U.S. cities, the IRC restores safety, dignity and hope to millions who are uprooted and struggling to endure.



RESCUING LIVES

Responding to crisis and restoring safety

Arriving on the scene within 72 hours of an emergency's onset, the IRC brings urgently needed supplies and expertise to aid people caught in the midst of chaos.

Healing the sick and preventing disease

During a crisis and in its aftermath, the IRC sends teams of doctors and other experts to provide immediate health care, sanitation and clean water.

Rebuilding communities and renewing dignity

The IRC makes the long-term commitment needed to help people to restore their shattered communities and work together toward a peaceful future.

Protecting and empowering women and girls

The IRC provides reproductive health care to mothers, supports survivors of sexual violence, and creates economic opportunities for women and girls who face enormous obstacles.

Taking care of children and reuniting families

The IRC reunifies families separated by conflict and catastrophe, and provides education and recreation programs to help children recover from trauma.

ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

Advocating for change and taking action

The IRC brings public attention to neglected humanitarian emergencies, speaking out on behalf of the oppressed and those displaced by violence or persecution.

RESETTLING REFUGEES

Resettling refugees in a new home

The IRC enables refugees who are admitted to the United States to establish new lives and become self-sufficient, productive citizens who add to the vitality and promise of the nation.

Excerpt from IRC's website, <http://www.rescue.org/our-work>

Japan Association for Refugees (JAR)

MISSION

To make Japan a safe and hospitable place for refugees and asylum seekers

To enable refugees to maintain self-reliable and sustainable life in Japan



Japan Association for Refugees

OBJECTIVE

Japan Association for Refugees (JAR) was established in July 1999 in order to provide comprehensive care to asylum seekers and refugees and to safeguard their human dignity. Since its establishment, JAR has helped approximately 2,000 people seeking asylum in Japan. JAR's scope of assistance ranges from daily survival assistance, social and legal counseling to public advocacy.

1. Major activities

- Provide legal assistance for the Refugees Status Determination Procedure (both in administration and judicial process)
- Provide social and legal counseling
- Provide financial assistance for everyday life
- Help finding housing, healthcare and obtaining employment

2. Advocate for refugees

- Broaden the general public's understanding of refugees issues in Japan through lectures, symposiums and publications
- Build network among NGOs, UN agencies, ministries and other experts in Japan
- Lobby politicians and advise the Cabinet's Refugee Policy Coordination Council
- Research on asylum/refugee policy and practices in other industrialized countries for advocacy
- Act as a voice of NGOs and refugees in Japan at international conferences

Japan Association for Refugees

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For Refugees (Toll Free): 0120-477-472

E-mail: info@refugee.or.jp

Website: <http://www.refugee.or.jp/en/>



Japan Association for Refugees