



Creative Dialogue Guidebook

for Working Harmoniously with Foreign Workers

Toward Creating Sustainable Communities and Workplaces



CSO Network Japan

Preface

“When we decided to hire foreign personnel, we saw it as a chance to transform ourselves.” These are the words of a human resources manager at a construction company in Saga Prefecture.

We believe that companies that employ foreign workers face a variety of difficulties, and that there are many problems caused by systems and structures that cannot be solved by a single company. On the other hand, when both employers and employees strive to solve problems through understanding what position or situation the other is in, including cultural differences, we think there is a possibility that new innovations and opportunities can be born within the organization.

This guidebook contains suggestions on improving work environments through *dialogue*. It is intended for corporate executives and managers who are making daily efforts to improve the workplace environment for foreign employees, as well as for coworkers facing the challenges of intercultural communication with their foreign colleagues.

Since ancient times, Japanese people have developed our society by actively adopting foreign cultures and civilizations. We believe this process involved many *creative dialogues* that prompted the creation of new things while flexibly accepting different cultures.

Our hope is that when our readers accept foreign talent into their organizations, it serves as an opportunity to make their workplaces more welcoming for a diverse workforce in general. We also hope that we can all work together toward a sustainable society.

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Our Proposal: Using the Acceptance of Foreign Workers as an Opportunity for *Creative Dialogue*

How did you initially feel when you welcomed foreign workers into your workplace? How did your expectations and anxieties change? And what kind of presence do they have in the workplace now? Are they all working with a sense of fulfillment in their jobs?

Communication Difficulties

Hiring foreign personnel requires procedures and management that are not required for Japanese employees. Therefore, employers must pay special attention to foreign workers. They may need to be provided careful explanations of Japanese systems such as tax and social insurance. These employees may also prioritize very different aspects in their work than their Japanese counterparts. As a result, we often hear from companies that they face difficulties in communication.

It has been said that the difficulty in communicating with foreign employees is due to the difference in cultural frameworks when people understand something, think further about it, and make decisions, on top of a language problem. In addition, when you compare workers who came from abroad to work in Japan with their Japanese colleagues, you see that the situations they are in could be so vastly different. Consequently, their feelings about wages and attitudes toward their superiors and managers are likely to differ greatly as well.

Proposal to Introduce Creative Dialogue

Foreign employees have vastly different frameworks for perceiving things, and people are rarely aware of this when communicating only among Japanese people. In order to create a safe and rewarding workplace that includes these foreign personnel, the concept of creative dialogue – in which both parties understand each other's frameworks, situations, and positions, and seek solutions by taking advantage of these differences – may be helpful.

By introducing creative dialogue, it may be possible to create workplaces that are comfortable not only for foreign talent but also for a diverse range of workers in general, and this could prove effective in attracting and retaining human resources. Details of this creative dialogue will be explained starting on the next page.

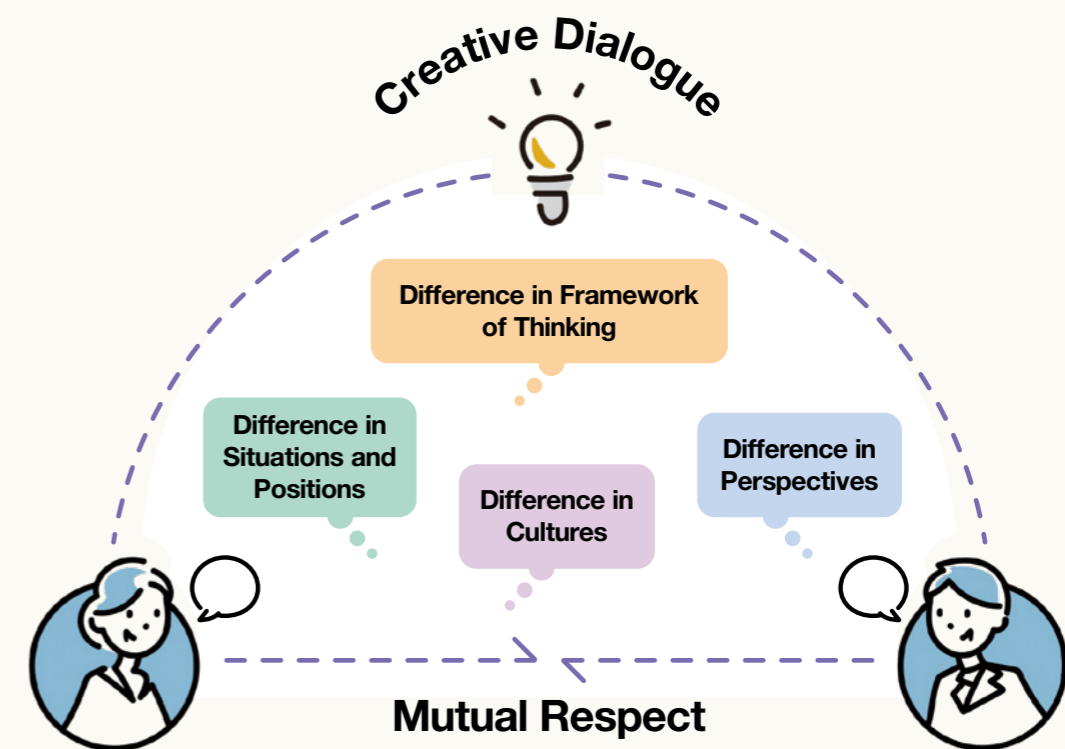
Both Foreign Workers and Their Employers Are Troubled by Differences in Culture and Values

According to a 2023 survey by the Ministry of Justice, the most common type of consultation from foreign workers is work related. And the most frequently cited problems during consultations are language problems and difficulties in communicating problems due to differences in cultures and values. 24.7% of the employers and 29.2% of the foreign employees feel that the communication gap due to differences in culture and values is a problem. (See data on p. 17)

What is *Creative Dialogue*?

Creative dialogue refers to a mutual exchange that takes place on an equal footing, in which both parties strive to understand each other's situations, positions, and cultural differences, while seeking solutions to problems and creating new initiatives.

Building on insights from different perspectives and different situations and cultures, *creative dialogue* can also be viewed as a process of creating solutions and approaches that have never existed before while having mutual respect, giving consideration to each other's positions and thought processes, and being ingenious in problem solving.



Learning from Dialogues at Overseas Japanese Corporations

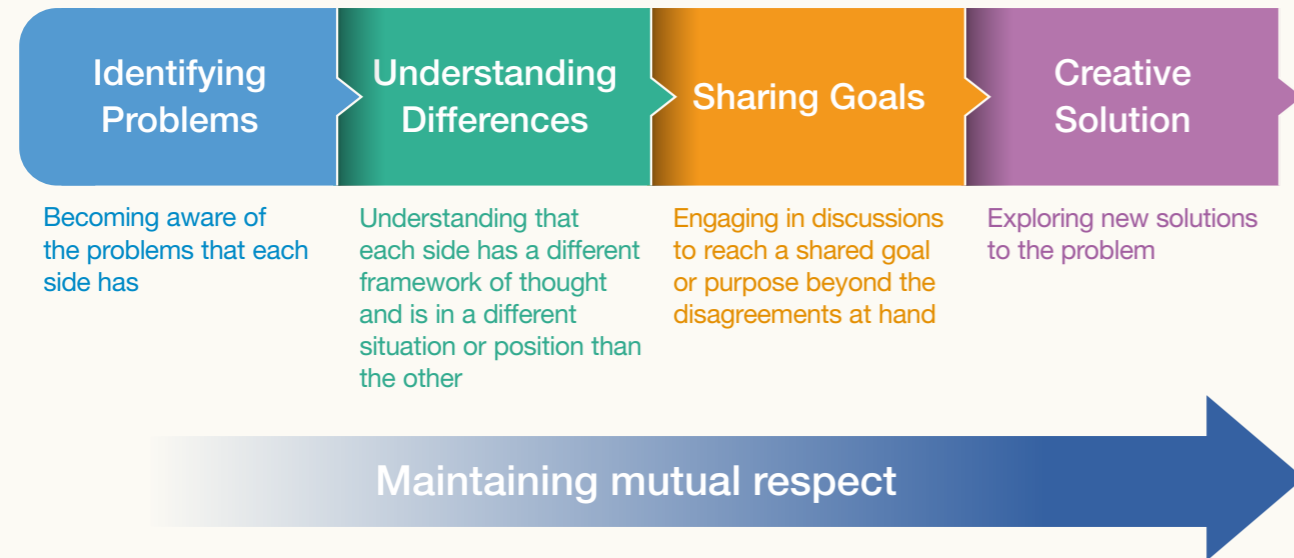
Some overseas subsidiaries of Japanese companies are creating rewarding work environments and improving business performance through operations and labor management based on dialogue with locally hired workers. Such companies are implementing the following initiatives:

- Always engage in dialogue and address problems while they are small.
- Since there is a big difference in the quality and quantity of information between management and employees, the first step is to trust each other and try to disclose and share information correctly.
- Employees are asked to raise suggestions from the bottom up, and management responds promptly.
- Promote corporate philosophy and policies in a way that fits the local market.

[Source: Institute of Developing Economies & ILO Online Seminar (February 4, 2021) "Implementing Responsible Labor Practices and Improving Sustainability in Global Supply Chains: The Case of Japanese Auto Parts Companies in Thailand" Summary Report]

Creative Dialogue Procedure

A possible procedure for *creative dialogue* would be to follow the flow of the dialogue, beginning with “Identifying Problems” and ending with reaching a “Creative Solution.” The diagram below represents the creative dialogue procedure, and the contents of each step are explained in detail in the Creative Dialogue Procedure section on pages 8 to 11. Throughout this entire process, it is important that all parties maintain an attitude of mutual respect.



Starting with Encountering Each and Every Foreign Worker

Ms. Orié Kitamikado of Saga Prefecture's Multicultural Promotion Division says that when she speaks about multiculturalism at elementary schools, she is careful not to easily separate the Japanese and the foreigners. To the children, for instance, Risa is not a foreigner but just a friend, but being categorized as a foreigner by adults may in fact create a wall amongst the children.

We can think the same way in the workplace as well, so instead of thinking of someone as “that foreign person,” we could think of that person as a “so-and-so in our workplace who just happened to be from a foreign country.” Building relationships in that order – as an individual person first and their qualifier second – will lead to an attitude of mutual respect, which is important in promoting creative dialogue.

In fact, it takes time to be able to engage in creative dialogue with foreign workers, and the results may not be immediate. However, Ms. Kitamikado says that as they work together slowly and with mutual respect, local companies have told her, “New projects were launched thanks to improved communication!” A third party being involved could serve as a buffer or a bridge between the foreign employees and the employer, so we hope that you will take on the challenge of having a dialogue with that one person in your company who just happened to come from another country, while also actively seeking external help in your dialogues.

What Creative Dialogue Creates?

Creative dialogue can generate new approaches that are not bound by conventional ways of doing things; this is possible when we encounter other people's perspectives and frameworks of thought that are different from our own. The following are examples of what creative dialogue can create in workplaces where foreign workers are employed.

Improved Operations and Productivity

There is an example of a company that organized and standardized work processes to make it easier for foreign employees to understand the processes. Thanks to this, the quality of work was stabilized and overall work efficiency was improved, resulting in higher productivity.

Workplace For a Diverse Workforce

If your workplace is a place where not only foreign workers but also diverse people – such as women, elderly, and people with disabilities – can work comfortably, then psychological safety is ensured for all, leading to the establishment of a comfortable work environment for all employees.

Talent Acquisition and Retention

A good workplace also works to the employer's advantage in attracting potential employees. It also encourages the retention of employees, which in turn improves the company's business capabilities.

Employment of Foreign Workers is a Catalyst for a System to Train Young People

Uematsu Kensetsu in Kashima City, Saga Prefecture, is a local civil engineering and construction company that has been involved in the development of social infrastructure since its establishment in 1933. The company hired its first foreign engineer three years ago against the backdrop of a labor shortage in the region where their skilled employees had aged and there was a need to improve the company's vitality. The current foreign employee from Nepal is a graduate of a construction vocational school who was interested in the scholarship program the company offered.

This scholarship program embodies President Uematsu's desire to support young people, and in response to this desire, the first newly-graduated person to join the company in its 90-year history was this person from Nepal. Responding to the specifics of welcoming a foreign employee made them realize something else at the same time. They realized that the workplace environment and human resource development methods that they had always had were not appropriate for today's young people in general, and having a new foreign hire served as a great opportunity to improve their system for accepting young people in general.

For Uematsu Corporation, the hiring of a foreign worker led to the creation of a workplace where a diverse workforce can work comfortably. In October 2024, the company received the top prize from the Minister of Health, Labor, and Welfare in the “Competition for Companies with Active Older Workers,” which recognizes companies that are working to create a workplace where older workers can work comfortably. In addition, the company was recognized as a “Company that Supports Youths” by the Japanese government, which certifies small and medium-sized enterprises that are proactive in recruiting and training young people and have excellent employment management conditions.

Creating an Environment for *Creative Dialogue*:

Creating Safe Space, Building Relationships, and Collaborating with Stakeholders

In order to promote creative dialogue, it will be important to create a safe space for dialogue and to build relationships with foreign employees. It will also be effective to collaborate with stakeholders by having a third party present who can visualize the framework of thought behind each other's opinions, or by having labor or legal experts in attendance. When resolving issues through creative dialogue, it may also be necessary to reaffirm labor laws and international human rights.

We hope that the introduction of creative dialogue will create a virtuous cycle whereby problems are solved together, trust is fostered in the workplace, and creative dialogue is further promoted.



Seven Principles of *Creative Dialogue* for Realizing a Society in Harmony with Foreign Workers

The following seven principles summarize how to be prepared to promote creative dialogue with foreign personnel.

These principles state that everyone is born with equal rights as a human being, and that we should respect each other, acknowledge differences of opinion, and find a new common ground through full discussion in accordance with international norms on human rights and labor.

- 1** | Review international norms on human rights and humane work practices
(Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights*1, ILO Core Labor Standards*2, etc.)
- 2** | Treat people from foreign countries equally as you would treat Japanese people.
- 3** | Understand the religions, languages, cultures, and traditions behind the opinions.
- 4** | Carefully explain the background and reasons for the necessary rules.
- 5** | Do not treat anyone disadvantageously for expressing their opinion.
- 6** | Respect and acknowledge differences of opinion.
- 7** | Discuss thoroughly, explore points of agreement, and find a new common ground.

These principles were developed by CSO Network Japan with reference to the Dhaka Principles for Migration with Dignity (which are principles for the responsible recruitment and employment of migrant workers) and other documents. The Dhaka Principles were developed by the Institute for Human Rights and Business (IHRB) in 2011 in consultation with private companies, governments, trade unions, and civil society organizations, based on the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and international human rights standards.

*1: The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) recommend "human rights due diligence" to identify risks of human rights violations through dialogue with various stakeholders, including employees, clients, consumers, business partners, and industry associations, and to take preventive and mitigation measures.

*2: The ILO Core Labor Standards set minimum standards to be observed with respect to work and consist of five principles: freedom of association and recognition of the right to collective bargaining, elimination of forced or compulsory labor, abolition of child labor, elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation, and safe and healthy work environment.

Recognizing and Identifying Problems in Need of Dialogue

In the following pages, the creative dialogue procedure will be explained step by step.

In order to solve problems through dialogue, we must first become aware of the problem and identify issues that require dialogue. Opportunities to become aware of problems include individual employees bringing up issues during daily work, consultations during regular one-on-one meetings with employees, information from official consultation services, and even suggestions from NGOs and experts.

In order to identify problems that need to be resolved that require dialogue, companies should select those that have the highest priority based on urgency and importance to their foreign employees. If there is any uncertainty or hesitation in identifying the issues, consultation with local authorities or experts may be considered.

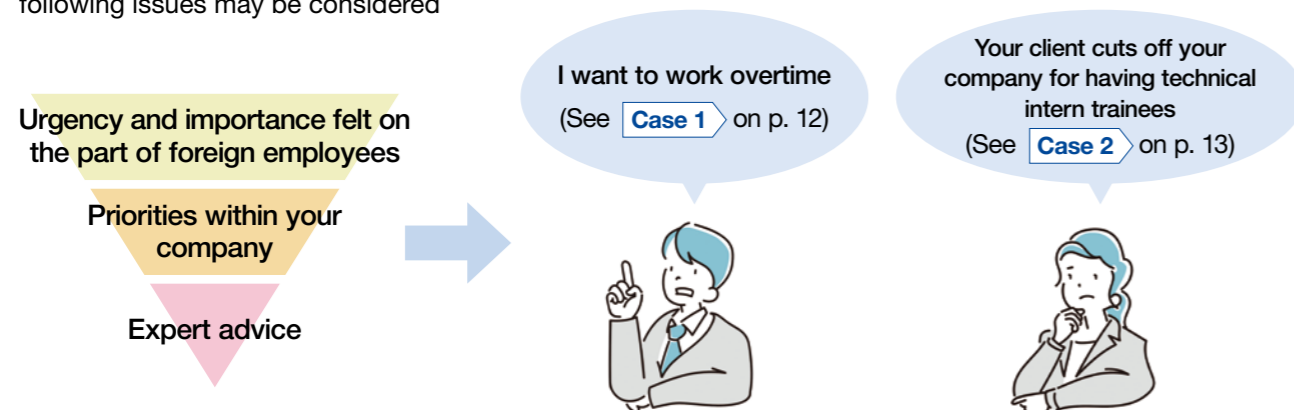
Recognizing Problems

To become aware of the problems, try setting up the following opportunities. While always keeping your eyes open, start with what you can do in a way that is appropriate for your workplace.



Identifying Problems

Respect the human rights of foreign employees and identify issues that need to be resolved that require dialogue, based on the severity of the issue from the perspective of the foreign workers. For example, the following issues may be considered



Understanding the Differences in Backgrounds, Including Differences in Frameworks of Thought, Situations, and Positions

In promoting dialogue, consider the background of the problem, and the positions and circumstances of the people involved. In the case of foreign workers, it is necessary to be aware that the values and cultures they hold dear are different from those of their Japanese counterparts, and that they are in different situations or positions as migrant workers with restrictions on the scope of their employment and the length of their stay in Japan.

Even differences in opinion can be understood if we try to put ourselves in the other's situation, position, or perspective, and we should use this understanding as a common basis for dialogue. In addition, it may lead to new ways of solving the problem if we can work together with the parties involved to examine the problem from multiple perspectives from a broader and long-term perspective, taking into account their respective standpoints and circumstances.

Foreign Workers' Circumstances

People from foreign countries come to Japan to work for various reasons. Some come with dreams of establishing a future career through acquiring language or technical skills. On the other hand, there are also many who have taken on debt, determined to work for their families.

We hear that some have fallen in love with Japan and wish to continue working in Japan.

Each foreign worker has their own circumstances and thoughts. The first step toward solving problems is to listen to that person's thoughts, being mindful of their situations and positions, and then discuss at length what can be done based on that.



Employer's Circumstances

In addition to labor shortages, reasons for companies to hire foreign personnel may include the need for diverse human resources, expectations regarding the skills and work styles of foreign workers, and interest in international expansion.

It is important for the entire company to understand and share the purposes and policies in hiring foreign workers, which is an important business decision, and to tackle issues related to foreign employees based on this shared understanding.

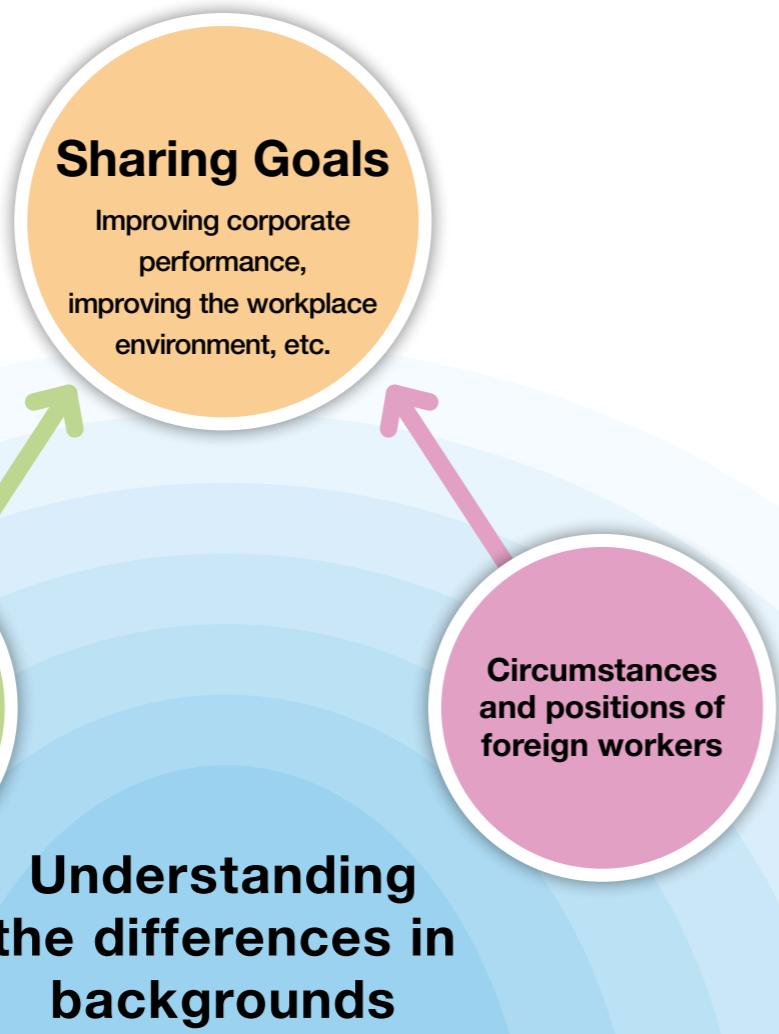
Sharing Goals Beyond Disagreement

Knowing the circumstances behind each other's opinions creates understanding and empathy for each other, and establishes a common ground for dialogue.

To make the dialogue more creative, further explore the goals and objectives that you can share with each other beyond your disagreements.

For example, improving corporate performance could be a common goal for management as well as for foreign workers who are employees, as they can expect to receive bonuses or better benefits. Or, in order to facilitate the smooth progress of work, calling on and cooperating with each other – which would include both foreign and Japanese employees – may lead to improved safety in the workplace and a better work environment.

A common goal among people working in the same workplace would allow them to explore specific problem-solving threads.



Finding New Solutions Based on Shared Understanding of the Backgrounds and Shared Goals

Once the people involved in the problem understand each other's situations and positions, and when they share the same goals, explore the essential solutions to the problem from a broader, long-term perspective with all parties involved.

From a Broader Perspective, With All Parties Involved

Some problems may have been initially seen as something strictly between a foreign employee and their employer. However, when the differences in the positions and circumstances of each party are understood, common goals are shared, and when the existence of all the parties involved in the problem can be recognized, then with the help of those parties, a better solution may be generated.



From a Long-Term Perspective

Even if a mutually satisfactory solution cannot be found at this stage, there may be a way to indicate a direction for future improvement and to think about how to work toward it.

Some foreign workers seek to develop their careers within the context of international mobility. By engaging in dialogue not only about immediate problems but also about the future, long-term solutions may emerge.

Toward Solutions That Respect Internationally Recognized Human Rights

When seeking solutions, it will be important to respect the human rights of foreign workers and promote creative dialogue based on the basic labor laws in Japan (such as the Labor Standards Act) as well as international norms on labor and human rights, with the help of experts if necessary.



Creative Dialogue Procedures with Foreign Workers Through Case Studies

Case 1 Responding to Requests for Overtime Work

Identifying Problems

Some foreign employees working in the factories in regional areas make desperate requests for more overtime work.

Understanding Differences

The background to this request may include a variety of circumstances and reasons, such as the pressure of debt that the foreign worker took on when they arrived in Japan, the circumstances surrounding family back home who are waiting for remittances, fluctuations in the Japanese exchange rate, and comparisons of working conditions with workers from the same country who are working for other companies.

First, carefully listen to the circumstances and thoughts behind the request, and, if possible, think together about future plans, including financial aspects.

Sharing Goals

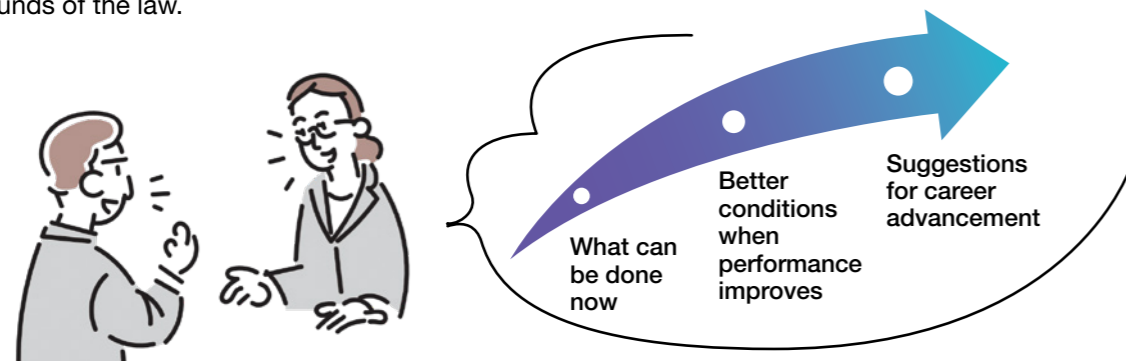
The employer could start by explaining, to the extent possible, the current business situation, the state of the business as it relates to overtime work, and future business policies. It would be necessary for the foreign employee to understand what the employer can and cannot do now with regard to overtime work and salary levels based on the company's status quo.

Creative Solution

Even if the employer cannot offer a solution that would be satisfactory to the foreign employee right now, it may be helpful to explain that improved performance in the future could lead to bonuses, better benefits, and higher wages, and discuss what can be done to achieve this.

For foreign workers interested in career development, there may also be things you could offer them within the company, such as developing their skills and providing training. You may be able to show them a vision of their future, such as acquiring qualifications and career advancement through skills development and improvement of Japanese language skills.

It is also important to provide a thorough explanation of the Japanese legal system governing working conditions, so that they understand that the employer is expected to respond within the bounds of the law.



Case 2 Responding to Severed Business Relationship Due to Your Company Having Technical Intern Trainees

Identifying Problems

We have heard of cases where a company is told by their client that they will stop doing business with them because foreign technical intern trainees have been hired, without verifying the trainees' working conditions or environment.

Understanding Differences

Behind this problem lies the attitude and policies of clients that seek to distance themselves from human rights risks. There may also be a lack of information disclosure on the part of the company employing foreign workers. How media reports on the technical intern training program may also be the cause, or the relationship between labor and management that is considered a problem of the program itself.

First, ask the client company for its policies and the standards required of business partners. At the same time, offer an opportunity for dialogue and explain that you are in compliance with labor laws and regulations while reviewing documents related to labor management. Introduce any initiatives you may have implemented to improve the work environment, and make sure the client understands the actual situation and your company's stance.

Sharing Goals

Reconcile what the client is looking for in business partners with what your company can offer, and also look for a mutually shared vision and points of agreement based on the environment surrounding the business and future projections.

Creative Solution

If hiring of foreign talent is in and of itself considered a human rights risk, then it is important to proactively disclose information on how the work environment at your company is in compliance with laws and regulations. If the disclosure by individual companies is not strong enough, it may be effective for industry associations to promote efforts to improve the work environments and communicate this information as an industry.

When there is considered to be a difference in power relations between you and your client, it is also effective to have an expert or neutral third party with knowledge of labor laws and labor systems participate in the dialogue by having them attend the meeting to provide fair and objective advice. The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights call for business partners to cooperate with each other in addressing human rights risks and improving the situation.



Creative Dialogue with Foreign Workers

Initiatives of Japanese Corporations in Vietnam

OLYMPUS VIETNAM CO., LTD.



Olympus Corporation manufactures and sells endoscopes and other surgical medical equipment in 37 countries and regions. We visited Olympus Vietnam Co., Ltd., in an industrial park in Dong Nai Province, Vietnam, which has one of its manufacturing bases. We heard about the management of its approximately 1,660 local employees, focusing on how dialogue should be conducted.

Careful Dialogue with Employees

Olympus Vietnam makes an effort to engage in careful dialogue with local employees. In particular, when notifications are issued concerning monetary compensation, such as wages and salary increases, or changes are made to the personnel system, they consider it important to carefully explain the reasons and background from various perspectives, including the processes leading up to the change, head office's thoughts, and the social conditions in Vietnam. If employees are still dissatisfied with the explanation, their own managers may interview them and the human resources managers would have dialogues with them individually. They provide explanations through various channels until the employees are satisfied, being committed to integrity and respect for the employees.

High Ratio of Female Employees and Managers

While DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) management is promoted based on the head office's policy, Olympus Vietnam has been able to achieve this in many areas in a realistic manner. For example, in terms of their female employees, more than 70% of all employees are women and many of the managers are also women. The company places importance on manual dexterity and detailed management skills, which are essential in the delicate manufacturing of medical devices, and has been hiring and utilizing the necessary human resources regardless of gender, which has naturally led to the success of female employees.

Virtuous Cycle of Human Resources Development and Performance Improvement

Olympus Vietnam is actively developing its human resources by increasing wages through the acquisition of qualifications and by establishing a system for talented employees to study and train in Japan. In Vietnam, people are more growth-oriented in their careers, and the turnover rate tends to be high in general, but few people leave Olympus Vietnam, which places importance on human resources development.

The company aims to foster a win-win relationship between Vietnam and Japan by creating a growth cycle in which the development of local employees results in improved business performance, which in turn creates new jobs.

(Interview on March 6, 2024)

OMRON Healthcare Manufacturing Viet Nam Co., Ltd.



OMRON Healthcare Co., Ltd., was established as a spin-off from OMRON Corporation to develop and market home and medical health equipment and services. We visited OMRON Healthcare Manufacturing Viet Nam Co., Ltd., in Binh Duong Province, which is one of OMRON Healthcare's overseas production bases, and heard about how the company is handling dialogues with its local employees over labor management and workplace environment issues.

Commitment to High-Quality Dialogue

OMRON Healthcare has a basic stance of listening to the voices of employees, and places importance on *KURUMAZA*, a dialogue with management to create an atmosphere in which employees feel comfortable talking, and *TAKIBI*, a dialogue between organizations and among members that emphasizes psychological safety.

OMRON Healthcare Manufacturing Viet Nam also provides opportunities for local employees and Japanese managers to talk in small groups, either directly or through interpreters. The company has naturally fostered a relationship of equality, with employees taking the initiative in improving the meals at the company cafeteria, which was of great interest the employees, and in frank discussions about wages on a daily basis.

With a Mindset for Nurturing Instead of Instructing

It is the same in Japan and Vietnam that problems occur when people are treated just as labor. When Japanese employees are transferred from the head office, in addition to knowledge and experience, they also have the authority that comes from the head office; this may lead to them treating local employees just as labor even if there is no intention to do so. In light of this risk, we heard that the company is very conscious of nurturing local employees by taking a step back and watching over them from behind the scenes.

Creating a Workplace That Respects Diversity

OMRON Healthcare is moving forward with respect for diversity in the workplace. This is due to an increase in the number of employees with experiences in overseas factories and sales offices, and a growing awareness that diversity is a natural part of the workplace.

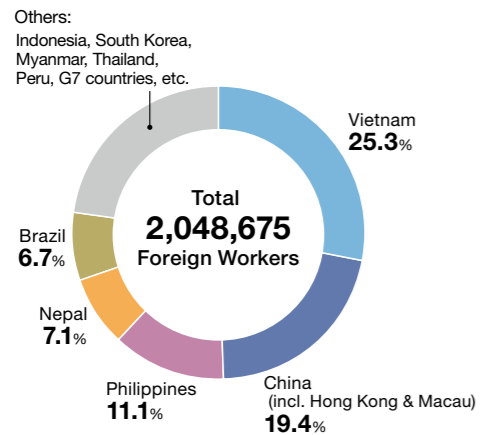
OMRON Healthcare Manufacturing Viet Nam also employs people with disabilities (although this is rare in Vietnam). The Japanese and Vietnamese employees have visited OMRON Kyoto Taiyo Co., Ltd., a factory in Kyoto, Japan, that is a sheltered workshop for people with disabilities, in order to learn from their workplace model. While making use of such experiences, they hope that eventually all will see that everyone is different, not just those with disabilities, and that it is necessary to face each person as they are and respond accordingly. They concluded that diversity is just a matter of fact, that it is essentially not something that needs to be upheld.

(Interview on March 7, 2024)

Data on Foreign Workers

Foreign Workers by Nationality (%)

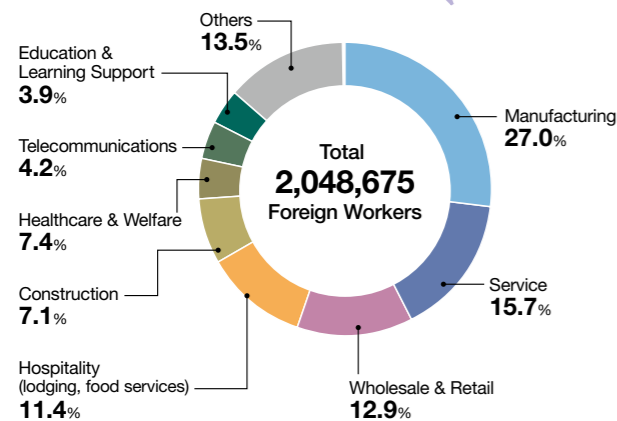
By nationality, Vietnam has the largest percentage of foreign workers at about 25%, followed by China and the Philippines.



Source: Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare "Summary of Notification of Status of Employment Among Foreign Nationals" (as of October 31, 2023)

Ratio of Foreign Workers by Industry

In terms of foreign workers overall, most are in the manufacturing, service, and construction industries. As for technical intern training, most are in the construction and food manufacturing industries. And most specified skilled workers are in the food and beverage manufacturing, machine parts and tooling, industrial machinery, and electric, electronics, and information industries and tooling.

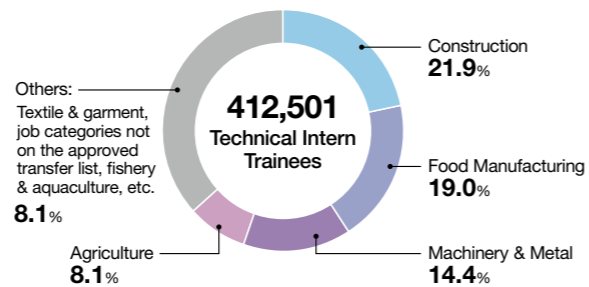


Source: Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare "Measures for Employment of Foreign Nationals" [based on Notification of Status of Employment Among Foreign Nationals (as of October 31, 2023)]

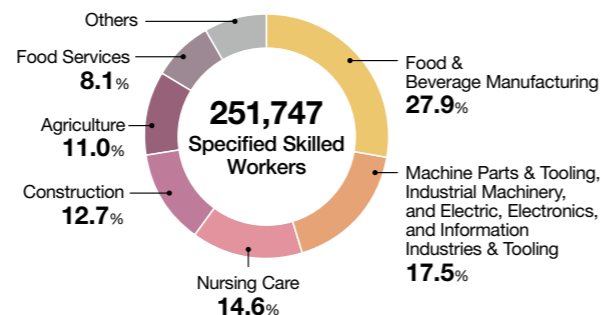
Foreign Workers by Status of Residence

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| 1 Status of Residence Eligible for Work: | Approx. 596,000 |
| Specialized/Technical Field Statuses: Professor/Highly Specialized Professionals, Business Administration, Legal/Accounting, Medical, Research, Education, Engineer and Humanities/International Services, Intracompany Transferee, Nursing Care, Skilled Labor, and Specified Skills | |
| 2 Designated Activities: | Approx. 72,000 |
| Includes Certified Care Worker candidates on the basis of Economic Partnership Agreements, working holiday, etc. | |
| 3 Technical Intern Training: | Approx. 413,000 |
| 4 Permission to Engage in Activities Outside of Status of Residence: | Approx. 353,000 |
| International students working part-time and others given permission to work that do not hinder the activities for which status of residence is previously granted (Work limited to 28 hours per week). | |
| 5 Status of Residence Based on Personal Status or Position: | Approx. 616,000 |
| Permanent Resident, Spouse of Japanese National, Long-Term Resident (mostly Japanese descendants/Nikkei-jin), etc. | |

Source: Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare "Measures for Employment of Foreign Nationals" [based on Notification of Status of Employment Among Foreign Nationals (as of October 31, 2023)]

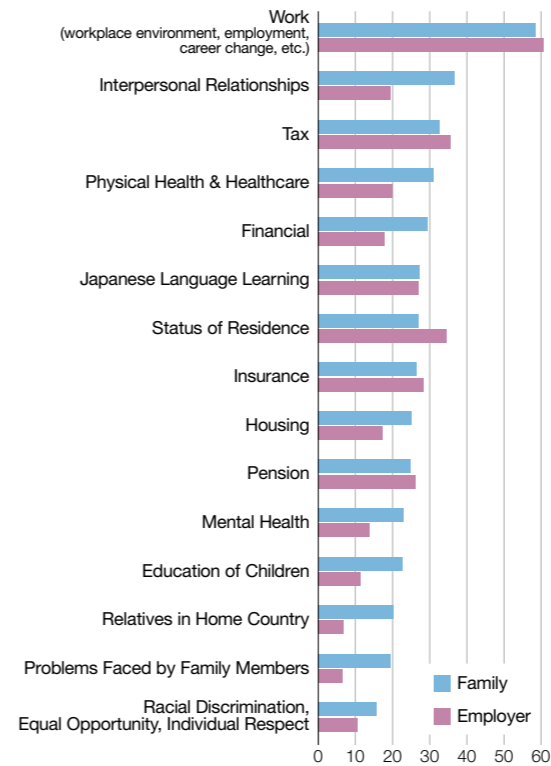


Source: Organization for Technical Intern Training (OITT) "FY2022 OITT Operational Statistics Summary"

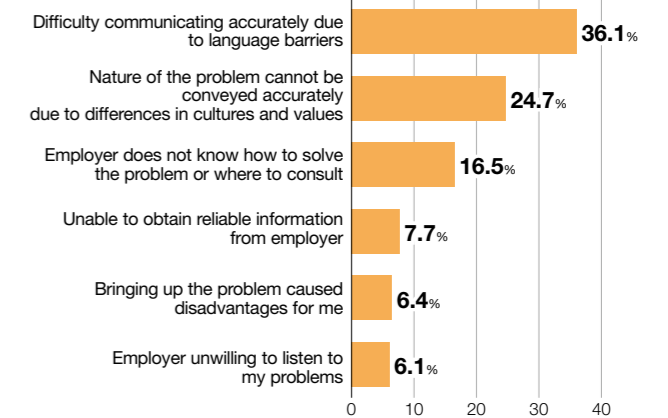


Source: Immigration Services Agency "Status of Operation of the Specified Skilled Worker Program" (Preliminary figures as of June 30, 2024)

Foreign Workers' Consultation Topics

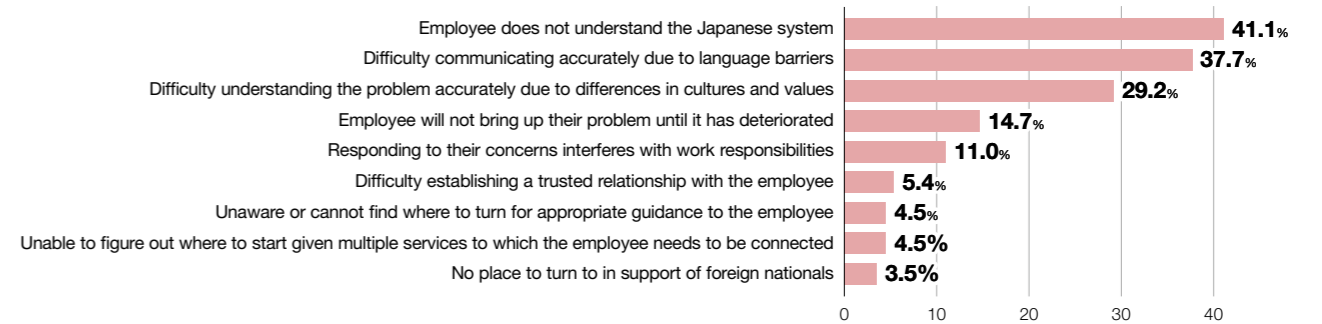


Problems Foreign Workers Face When Consulting with Their Employers



Most of the consultations from foreign workers are related to work. Both the employer and the foreign workers themselves often face communication issues due to language problems and differences in cultures and values.

Troubles Experienced Among Employers When Foreign Employees Bring Up Their Problems

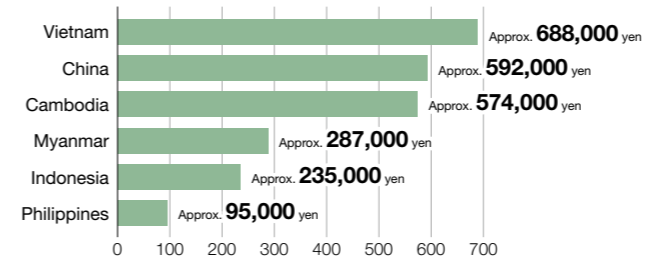


Source: Ministry of Justice "Basic Survey of Foreign Residents".

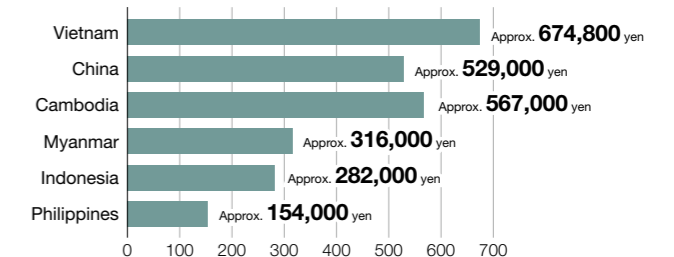
Expenses & Debt: Actual Amounts Paid by Technical Intern Trainees Prior to Arriving in Japan

The average amount paid by technical intern trainees to come to Japan is approximately 540,000 yen. About 55% of all trainees borrowed money before coming to Japan. The average amount of debt is 547,788 yen.

Average Amount Paid to Sending Agency and Intermediaries in Home Country (By Nationality)



The average amount of debt (By Nationality)



Source: Immigration Services Agency "Survey on Actual Conditions Concerning Costs Paid by Technical Intern Trainees" (July 2022)

Support and Consultation Information on Employment of Foreign Workers

E Information Intended for Employers

JW Information Intended for Japanese Workers

FW Information Intended for Foreign Workers

Support for Employers Hiring Foreign Workers

Flyer: “Safety and Health Training Materials for Foreign Workers” **E**

**Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare;
Prefectural Labor Bureaus;
and Labor Standards Inspection Offices (May 2024)**



Compilation of safety and health education materials in up to 14 languages and for a wide range of industries. Provides manga and video materials, safety and health training manuals for unskilled workers, and supplementary materials for skills training.

A Daily Life Support Portal for Foreign Nationals **E JW FW**

Immigration Services Agency



Provides a wealth of useful information for foreign residents and supporters, including guidebooks in 16 languages on living and working in Japan. From the portal's “Employment and Work” subpage, information on “Work Safety and Health Measures for Foreign Workers” and the “Portal Site for the System for Foreign Human Resources with Specified Skills” can be accessed.

Early Adaptation Training for Newly Arrived Foreign Workers: Curriculum **E JW FW**

Aichi Prefecture



Curriculum developed as a support tool for employers hiring foreign workers, helping the workers adjust smoothly to the workplace and daily life. Educational materials for foreign workers in 8 languages (including easy Japanese), videos, and instructor's manual provided.

JP-MIRAI Portal **E JW FW**

Japan Platform for Migrant Workers towards Responsible and Inclusive Society (JP-MIRAI)



Provides useful information for foreign workers to safely and securely work and live in Japan. JP-MIRAI Assist, a consultation service for foreign workers living in Japan, is also available for consultation from parties involved in supporting foreign workers.

JP-MIRAI proactively provides opportunities for trainings on the acceptance of foreign workers and report-out sessions on member activities as part of their pillar activities that promote “mutual learning and public communication.”



Training and Employment System

In June 2024, the Revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act was passed and enacted with a focus on the establishment of a new Training and Employment System to replace the technical intern training program. The law is scheduled to go into effect in 2027, with full transition expected around 2030.

The purpose of the Training and Employment System is to secure workers who can support industries for a long period of time by developing human resources at the level of Category 1 Specified Skilled Worker through employment for three years in principle. At the same time, it also aims to protect the human rights of foreign workers, improve their rights as workers, and optimize the requirements of supervising organizations.

In principle, the fields of employment for Training and Employment are the same as those of the Specified Skilled Worker Program (although fields not suited for domestic training are not included). In June 2023, the fields of employment for Category 2 Specified Skilled Worker, which does not stipulate the period of stay, was added, and the fields of employment became the same as those for Category 1 Specified Skilled Worker except for nursing care.

Creative Dialogue Checklist:

Toward a Society in Harmony with Foreign Workers

To promote *creative dialogue*, it will be helpful to conduct a check on the environment for dialogue in your workplace. *Creative dialogue* is generated when we can create spaces where psychological safety is ensured, build relationships through careful explanations and sincere responses, and collaborate with experts, third parties, and other stakeholders.

We suggest you start with whatever small step you can take to create a workplace where all employees including those from foreign countries can work with enthusiasm.

- 1. Are you regularly calling foreign employees by their names?
- 2. Are you holding regular meetings with foreign employees to discuss working conditions and future career opportunities?
- 3. Are you providing detailed explanations to foreign employees regarding salary details (including taxes, social insurance, etc.) and changes in working conditions?
- 4. Do you have someone in your workplace with whom foreign employees can easily talk when they have problems? Have you established a system and environment where they can easily discuss their problems?
- 5. Are you listening carefully to the opinions of foreign employees and responding sincerely to what you can do, while explaining the reasons for what you cannot do, in ways that are easy for them to understand?
- 6. Are there Japanese employees at your workplace who can chat with their foreign colleagues about matters outside of work?
- 7. When foreign employees bring up a problem to you, are you introducing services or specialized organizations that can be of help to them?
- 8. Do you have someone you can go to when problems related to foreign employees arise between your company and your business partners?
- 9. Are your Japanese employees respecting the cultures, religions, and annual events of the countries of origin of their foreign colleagues?
- 10. Are you introducing local events and people to your foreign employees?

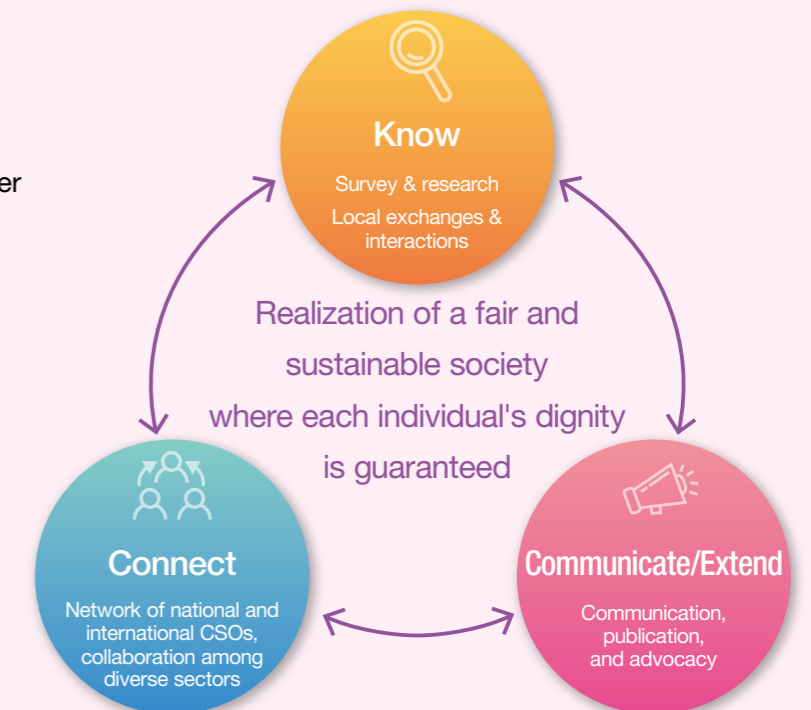
[Created by CSO Network with reference to Aichi Prefecture's "Early Detection and Adaptation Training Curriculum for Foreign Workers," etc.]

About CSO Network Japan:

We are a nonprofit organization with the mission of "Exploring valuable initiatives for a fair and sustainable society, and promoting solutions to social issues through multi-stakeholder participation and dialogue."

Our Main Activities:

- Promoting responsible business
- Creating sustainable communities
- Program evaluation
- Collaboration with civil society organizations
- Promoting sustainability and understanding of human rights



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