



EDI Program for Global Leaders

FY2025 FINAL REPORT



Ochanomizu University

Report of EDI Program

Center for International Education

Ochanomizu University

March 2026

Table of Contents

① Overview of the EDI Program	1
② Report of International Student Symposium	
01. H. Chisaka Ochanomizu University, JAPAN	9
02. M. Hoshiga Ochanomizu University, JAPAN	15
03. T. Watanabe Ochanomizu University, JAPAN	21
04. S. Sado Ochanomizu University, JAPAN	29
05. K. Owada Ochanomizu University, JAPAN	35
06. A. Maita Ochanomizu University, JAPAN	43
07. S. Castellanos Saint Mary's College, U.S.A.....	49
(Presentation made with C. Orogan, University of Technology Sydney, AUSTRALIA and A.Ono Ochanomizu University, Japan)	
③ Report of Short-Term Internship Presentation	
08. N. Batanda University of East Anglia, U.K.	57
(Presentation made with H. Ozaki, Ochanomizu University, Japan)	
09. J. C. Ezechikamnyo Saint Mary's College, U.S.A.....	65
(Presentation made with F. Kawai, Ochanomizu University, Japan)	
10. E. Stewart Saint Mary's College, U.S.A.....	73
(Presentation made with R. Otsubo, Ochanomizu University, Japan)	
11. S.Ikeda Ochanomizu University, JAPAN	79
(Presentation made with S. Castellanos, Saint Mary's College, U.S.A)	
12. J. Bian University of Technology Sydney, AUSTRALIA	87
(Presentation made with H. Takami, Ochanomizu University, Japan)	

13. T. Le	University of Technology Sydney, AUSTRALIA	95
	(Presentation made with H. Tomimatsu, Ochanomizu University, Japan)	
14. S. Nguyen	University of Technology Sydney, AUSTRALIA	101
	(Presentation made with A. Ono, Ochanomizu University, Japan)	
15. C. Orogan	University of Technology Sydney, AUSTRALIA	109
	(Presentation made with N. Ietaka, Ochanomizu University, Japan)	
16. D. M. Prochacka	Ochanomizu University, JAPAN	115
	(Presentation made with M. Shida, Ochanomizu University, Japan)	
④ Report of Long-Term Internship Presentation		
17. D. M. Prochacka	Ochanomizu University, JAPAN	121
	(Presentation made with E. Stewart, Saint Mary's College, U.S.A.)	
18. A. Sato	Ochanomizu University, JAPAN	129
	(Presentation made with C. Orogan, University of Technology Sydney, AUSTRALIA)	
⑤ Evaluations of the EDI Program based on Self-Evaluation Questionnaires		
• VALUE rubric - Intercultural Knowledge and Competence.....		137
• Leadership		139
• Employability		141

Overview of the EDI Program

1. Introduction and Purpose of the Program

As a women's university with the longest history in Japan and Asia, Ochanomizu University has played a pioneering role in leading the academic world in Japan and Asia from a gender perspective and in fostering women leaders. With Ochanomizu University taking the lead in the East and representing the position of women and other minorities, and in cooperation with partner universities in the UK, Australia, and the U.S., we launched this women's university-based EDI program with the aim of developing global leaders with practical EDI qualities. EDI stands for Equality, Diversity, Inclusion. The EDI Program is an interdisciplinary curriculum that aims to develop global leaders who understand equity, diversity, and inclusion of people of various backgrounds from a practical academic perspective through courses that include internships.

The EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) program aims to develop global leaders who can demonstrate leadership in a changing international society and contribute to the realization of a sustainable society. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to cultivate the three skills: Comprehension. Communication. Collaboration. These skills are essential when considering solutions to global issues, and to develop individuals who can overcome the barriers of gender, and individuals who can design their own careers. The University Charter states that the university "is a place for all women with a desire to learn to realize their dreams with sincerity," and that the university "actively promotes human and cultural exchange in research and education with overseas countries, widely expands its activities, and demonstrates its unique presence in the international community." To realize this, the university fosters individuals who can achieve their dreams, lead the international community with Ochanomizu University as their base, and demonstrate leadership.

This program is cooperating with three overseas universities, University of East Anglia in the UK, University of Technology Sydney in Australia, and Saint Mary's College in U.S.A, to send and accept students respectively. Students take courses in "intercultural understanding," "society and culture," and "leadership" from different perspectives at the partner universities.

2. Details of the Program

In this program, students participated in a summer program from July to August 2025 and a global internship from August to September. From October to December, students took a group of EDI eligible courses offered at our university, and in December 2025, they hosted an international student symposium. The details of each program will be explained below.

2.1 Summer Program

Summer Program provides intensive courses in summer for students of partner universities from both domestic and overseas, as well as students of Ochanomizu University and Graduate School. All classes are multi-cultural, aiming for students' career development and promotion of international exchanges. EDI program participants took a lecture "Gender, Globalization, and Diversity in Contemporary Japan" and project work class. They also had opportunities to join various cultural and exchange events at off-lecture times.

2.2 Global Internship

The purpose of this program is to provide students with real work experience and practical exposure, enabling them to reflect on how the specialized knowledge acquired at university is applied in the workplace and to contemplate both problems and potential improvements. Through hands-on learning, students are expected to deepen their understanding of their own aptitude, develop manners and a sense of responsibility as professionals, and apply these skills in their career choices after graduation. In preparation, students learn about workplace etiquette and various considerations in job performance, conduct industry research, and engage in fieldwork related to practical aspects. Following this, all students participate in approximately two weeks of internship.

2.3 Fall Semester

The program consists of Area Specific Courses. Students are required to take at least one course from each group (I-V).

Internship Courses

- Global Internship I (2 credits)
Internship at global companies, NPOs, and/or NGOs in Tokyo
- Global InternshipII (2 credits)
Internship involved in English education at our affiliated elementary school and international school.

Gender Courses

- Comparative Women's Studies (2 credits)
- Lecture on Anglophone Literature and CultureIII(2 credits)
- Family Resource Management (2 credits)
- Summer Program in EnglishI-III (2 credits)

Global 3C Courses

- Globalization and LaborI(2 credits)
- Cultural TransformationI(2 credits)
- Language Education in Globalizing WorldI(1) (2 credits)
- Language Education in Globalizing WorldI(2) (2 credits)

Career Design Courses

- Practicum for Global LeadershipI(2 credits)
- Personal Branding (2 credits)
- Facilitation (2 credits)
- Summer Program in English IV-VI (2 credits)

Japanese Language Courses

- Comprehensive JapaneseI(2 credits)
- Comprehensive JapaneseII(2 credits)
- Seminar: Japanese CultureIB (2 credits)

2.4 International Student Symposium

The EDI Program holds an international student symposium as a final report to review their study abroad experiences, global internship, summer program in the program. Especially students reflect on their studies about EDI (Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) at their study abroad destination universities, and discuss cross-cultural exchange and cultural diversity. There is a Q&A session after the students' presentation to provide an opportunity for the students to ask questions and discuss each other's presentation. The symposium is publicized widely both inside and outside the university, and participation by overseas partner universities, other domestic universities, and internship host companies is invited, and students' presentation is published as the EDI program report.

3. Evaluations of the EDI Program

The EDI Program was evaluated by conducting three kinds of self-evaluation questionnaires before and after the program regarding Value Rubric (Intercultural Knowledge and Competence), leadership and employability. By comparing the results of the self-evaluation questionnaires and understanding

how students' evaluations have changed before and after the EDI Program, the achievements of the program were evaluated (as described in detail later in this report). The respondents of the self-evaluation questionnaires were the 8 students from Ochanomizu University for the VALUE rubric and leadership questionnaires. The respondents of the self-evaluation questionnaire of Employability were those who participated in the Global Internship Program, including the 8 international students and 10 Japanese students from Ochanomizu University. The three kinds of the self-evaluation questionnaires are indicated in the following sections.

3.1 VALUE rubric : Intercultural Knowledge and Competence

The VALUE rubrics were developed by teams of faculty experts representing colleges and universities across the United States through a process that examined many existing campus rubrics and related documents for each learning outcome and incorporated additional feedback from faculty. The rubrics articulate fundamental criteria for each learning outcome, with performance descriptors demonstrating progressively more sophisticated levels of attainment. The rubrics are intended for institutional-level use in evaluating and discussing student learning, not for grading. The core expectations articulated in all 16 of the VALUE rubrics can and should be translated into the language of individual campuses, disciplines, and even courses. The utility of the VALUE rubrics is to position learning at all undergraduate levels within a basic framework of expectations such that evidence of learning can be shared nationally through a common dialog and understanding of student success. Intercultural Knowledge and Competence is “a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts.” (Bennett, J. M. [2008]. *Transformative training: Designing programs for culture learning*. In M. A. Moodian [Ed.], *Contemporary leadership and intercultural competence: Understanding and utilizing cultural diversity to build successful organizations* [pp. 95-110]. Sage.)

3.2 Leadership

The Leadership Assessment Index was developed in 2020 by Ochanomizu University's Institute for Global Leadership. This development process involved collecting and organizing various theoretical models of leadership from around the world as well as competency criteria and indicators for evaluating the results of leadership training. Understanding leadership as “the ability to motivate people and organizations through skills for cooperation,” indexes created for the purpose of developing women leaders were referred to. When designing the questions, special attentions were paid to use the phrases that allow students to intuitively understand the meaning. Of the 25 questions, the first 19 (regarding the abilities needed to display leadership in general) were those used internationally as the evaluation criteria, while questions 20 to 25 were created and

added in relation to gender, diversity, inclusion, and career development for women. To test the validity of the indicators, a basic component analysis were performed using the results for the 25 questions.

3.3 Employability

The Employability Worksheet is developed to help people who may lack the confidence to work at a full-time job or to describe their own strengths, allowing them to reflect on their experiences and discover which of their abilities are needed to succeed when working at a company so that they can make themselves more appealing to employers. The abilities and characteristics listed as the Basic Employment Skills are described below;

- Professional awareness (sense of responsibility, ambition and inquisitiveness, and positive attitude toward work)
- Taking action: ability to keep advancing without giving up (initiative, encouragement for others, and ability to take actions)
- Thinking thoroughly: ability to question and consider thoroughly (ability to find problems, planning, creativity)
- Teamwork: ability to work together in a diversified group of people to achieve goals (communication, listening, flexibility, understanding the situation, discipline, stress-control)



【キックオフシンポジウム Kick-off Symposium 2023.03.24-25】



【サマープログラム Summer Program 2025.08.05】



【グローバルインターンシップ成果報告 Global Internship Presentations 2025. 11.5】



【学生主催国際シンポジウム International Student Symposium 2025.12.10】

From Stereotypes to Coexistence: My Inclusive Journey at IIT Hyderabad

H. Chisaka (Ochanomizu University, JAPAN)

1, Introduction

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) are often discussed as abstract ideals within higher education. However, their real meaning becomes much clearer through lived experience rather than theory alone. Before participating in the EDI Program and beginning my exchange at the Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IIT Hyderabad), my understanding of diversity was mainly academic. It was shaped by classroom discussions, textbooks, and media representations, as well as my experiences in relatively homogeneous educational environments in Japan.

Although I believed myself to be open-minded, I carried unconscious stereotypes, particularly about India. These ideas were influenced by social media, news reports, and popular YouTube videos, which often focused on poverty, disorder, or danger. As a result, a vast and complex society was reduced in my mind to a limited and simplified image. I did not intentionally believe these stereotypes, but they existed quietly in my expectations.

This report reflects on how my study-abroad experience, together with the EDI Program, the summer program, and courses taken during the fall semester, transformed my understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion. By tracing my journey from stereotypes to everyday practices of coexistence, I argue that education—especially experiential and intercultural education—plays a crucial role in promoting genuine inclusion. Through academic learning, daily interactions, travel, and moments of discomfort, I came to realize that inclusion is not only about being accepted, but also about actively learning to understand others while critically reflecting on oneself.

2-1 Stereotypes Before Arrival and the Limits of Distant Knowledge

Before coming to India, much of my perception of the country was shaped by online content. Algorithm-driven media often highlights extreme or sensational aspects of unfamiliar places, and India was frequently portrayed through images of slums, pollution, or cultural shock. While I was aware that these portrayals were incomplete and biased, they still influenced my expectations at a subconscious level.

This situation reflects a broader issue in global education. Without direct engagement, knowledge about “others” tends to remain superficial and is easily shaped by stereotypes. The EDI Program encouraged us to think critically about how such stereotypes are produced and reproduced. However, it was only after arriving in India that I truly understood the limitations of my prior knowledge. My

first impressions of Hyderabad—its modern infrastructure, advanced academic environment, and the kindness of people I met—clearly contrasted with the images I had seen online. Recognizing this gap between representation and reality became the starting point of my inclusive learning process.

2-2 Discovering Diversity Through Everyday Campus Life

India is often described as a diverse country, but living there allowed me to experience this diversity in concrete and everyday ways. India has 22 official languages, numerous regional cultures, multiple religions, and highly varied food traditions. On the campus of IIT Hyderabad, students came from all over the country, each bringing different mother tongues, customs, and values shaped by their regional and cultural backgrounds.

English functioned as a common language on campus, yet it was natural to hear Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, and many other languages in daily conversations. What impressed me most was that inclusion was not only discussed in lectures, but actively practiced in everyday life. During group work, students adjusted their communication styles, showed patience toward different accents, and respected religious practices such as fasting or prayer times. Through these experiences, I gradually came to view diversity not as a problem that needed to be managed, but as a normal condition of social life.

This sense of inclusion was also strongly reflected in food culture, particularly in the widespread presence of vegetarianism. In India, being vegetarian is not treated as a special dietary preference, but as an ordinary and socially accepted way of life. On campus cafeterias, in local restaurants, and even in international fast-food chains, vegetarian options were always available. For example, even Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), which is strongly associated with meat-based food in many countries, offers some vegetarian menu items in India. This demonstrated that dietary diversity is not considered an exception, but a basic assumption in food services.

What further emphasized this point was the clear labeling system used for food and daily products. In India, vegetarian products are marked with a green symbol, while non-vegetarian products are marked with a red symbol. This labeling is not limited to food, but can also be found on cosmetics and other daily necessities. Such visibility allows people to make choices that align with their religious or ethical values without difficulty. This system showed me that vegetarianism is not seen as an individual inconvenience, but as an important condition of everyday life that society as a whole is designed to accommodate.

The background of this practice is closely connected to religion. In Hinduism, vegetarianism is commonly practiced by many believers, depending on their sect and personal beliefs. In Jainism, the principle of ahimsa, or non-violence toward all living beings, leads to a strict vegetarian lifestyle. Buddhist values have also contributed to the idea of minimizing harm to life. These religious and ethical traditions have shaped a society in which food choices are treated as deeply connected to moral

values and are therefore widely respected.

Through these experiences, I came to understand diversity not as something that requires special management, but as something that is already built into the design of everyday life. Inclusion, in this context, does not mean making additional adjustments for minorities after problems arise. Rather, it means creating environments from the beginning that assume the coexistence of different values and ways of living. Observing vegetarian culture in India helped me understand inclusion as a social foundation rather than a temporary solution.

2-3. Coexistence Beyond Humans: Animals on Campus

One of the most unexpected lessons about inclusion came from observing coexistence with animals on campus. IIT Hyderabad is home to many stray dogs, and instead of completely excluding them, students and staff have developed informal practices of coexistence. These include feeding them, taking injured animals to veterinarians, and allowing them to share public spaces.

From an EDI perspective, this environment raised important questions. Who is allowed to occupy shared spaces? How do power and vulnerability shape coexistence? Although animals and humans cannot be directly compared, this experience encouraged me to think more broadly about inclusion and responsibility. I began to understand that inclusion is closely connected to empathy and care, and that education can influence how we relate not only to people, but also to other living beings.

2-4. Challenges as the First Exchange Student

As the first exchange student from my home university to IIT Hyderabad, I faced unique challenges. There was no established system to follow and no senior exchange students to ask for advice. Many administrative procedures, including accommodation arrangements, course registration, and visa-related matters, had to be handled through trial and error. At times, this made me feel uncertain about my position within the institution.

At the same time, these challenges highlighted the importance of human support within educational systems. Faculty members, administrative staff, and fellow students consistently offered help, even when no clear guidelines existed. Their willingness to listen and respond showed that inclusion is not created only by policies, but also through everyday actions. This experience strongly reflected one of the key ideas of the EDI Program: equity often requires extra effort and flexibility to support those who fall outside existing structures.

5. Learning Through Mobility: Traveling Across India

Traveling across India played a significant role in deepening my understanding of internal diversity within the country. Beyond my daily life in Hyderabad, I visited Kerala, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Pune, Jaipur, New Delhi, and Agra. Each place offered different cultural, historical, and social contexts,

challenging the idea of India as a single, unified culture.

In Kerala, I visited Kochi, Munnar, and Thiruvananthapuram. The region's natural environment, strong emphasis on education, and community-based lifestyle differed greatly from my experiences in central and northern India. These differences made me realize how strongly geography, history, and local governance shape everyday life.

Some of my most meaningful learning experiences occurred through home stays rather than sightseeing. I stayed at friends' homes in Bhopal and New Delhi, where I was welcomed into family life and daily routines. Sharing meals, conversations, and ordinary moments allowed me to observe values such as hospitality, care, and intergenerational relationships in practice. Being treated not simply as a guest but as a temporary family member helped me understand inclusion as something lived and practiced, rather than formally defined.

I also visited IIT Delhi, which gave me the opportunity to compare institutional cultures within India. While both IIT Hyderabad and IIT Delhi are academically prestigious, their campus environments, student populations, and relationships with surrounding cities differed. This comparison showed me that diversity exists not only between countries, but also within national education systems. Through moving across regions, institutions, and households, I came to understand inclusion as something shaped by local context and relationships.

2-6. Redefining Inclusion: From Acceptance to Mutual Understanding

One of the most important realizations of my exchange experience was that inclusion goes beyond simply being "accepted" by others. Although I was warmly welcomed at IIT Hyderabad, true inclusion required my own active effort to understand those around me. This meant questioning my assumptions, listening more than speaking, and recognizing my positionality as a foreign student from Japan.

The EDI-related courses I took during the fall semester provided theoretical frameworks such as intersectionality and social equity. These concepts helped me interpret my experiences more clearly. For example, I began to notice how gender, language, nationality, and academic discipline intersected in daily interactions. Education played a crucial role by giving me tools to reflect critically instead of reacting emotionally.

3. Conclusion

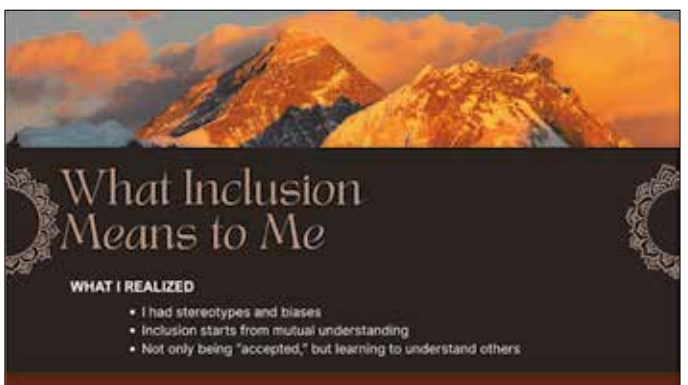
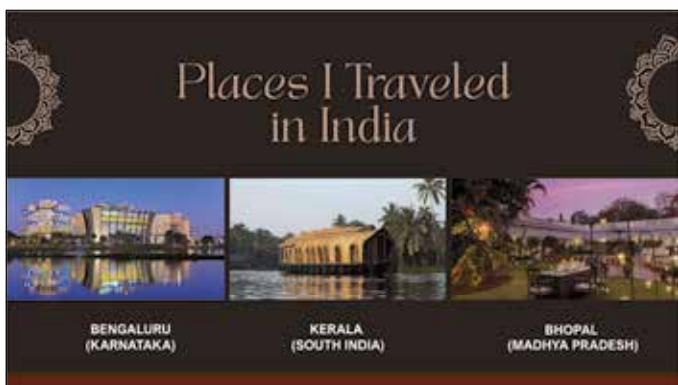
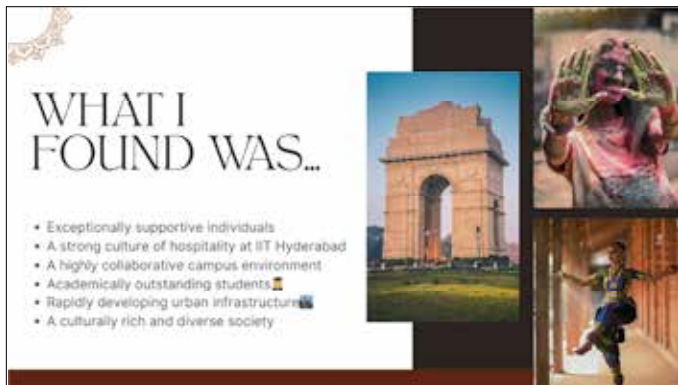
My journey at IIT Hyderabad transformed my understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion from abstract ideas into lived practices. Moving from stereotypes to coexistence required not only exposure to diversity, but also continuous reflection supported by education. The EDI Program, together with experiential learning through study abroad and travel, demonstrated that inclusion is not a fixed outcome but an ongoing process that must be revisited and renegotiated in different contexts.

Through interactions on campus, home stays with local families, and movement across regions and

institutions, I learned that equity does not mean treating everyone in the same way, but rather responding to differences with awareness and care. Diversity became meaningful to me not as a numerical concept, but as a collection of lived experiences shaped by language, history, geography, and relationships. Inclusion, in turn, emerged as a daily practice that requires effort, humility, and openness from all participants.

This experience has convinced me that education plays a powerful role in promoting EDI. By creating opportunities for intercultural engagement, encouraging critical self-reflection, and supporting individuals who fall outside dominant systems, educational institutions can contribute to more inclusive societies. Ultimately, inclusion begins not with policies alone, but with individuals who are willing to learn, unlearn, and grow together across differences.

Looking ahead, this experience has also shaped how I view my own responsibility as a learner and future professional. Having experienced inclusion as a practice embedded in everyday life, I hope to contribute to educational and social environments where diverse values are acknowledged from the outset rather than addressed only after exclusion occurs. Whether through research, education, or international collaboration, I aim to apply the lessons learned at IIT Hyderabad to create spaces that encourage dialogue, empathy, and mutual understanding. In this sense, my study-abroad experience was not a conclusion, but a starting point for continued learning and engagement with equity, diversity, and inclusion.



Issues in Equity' Diversity and Inclusion and the Role of Education - Based on My Experiences in Canada and the EDI Program at Ochanomizu University-

M. Hoshiga (Ochanomizu University, JAPAN)

1. Introduction

Recently, equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) initiatives have gained increasing attention around the world, and Japanese companies and organizations have also begun to implement DEI or DI initiatives in the workplace. At the same time, however, EDI has become a subject of controversy. In the United States, beginning during the presidency of Donald Trump, several major corporations, including Walmart, Meta, Disney, Target, and Ford, have scaled back or abolished their DEI programs⁽¹⁾. Such developments reveal the instability surrounding EDI and risk generating conflict and gaps in understanding among people.

These debates suggest that EDI is neither a simple nor a universally accepted concept. While EDI aims to address inequality and promote inclusion, its approaches, meanings and effects differ depending on social context and the type of inequality being addressed. As a result, misunderstandings and resistance toward EDI continue to emerge in both domestic and international settings.

In this report, I reconsider the difficulties surrounding EDI by examining different approaches to justice, particularly affirmative and transformative remedies, and their respective advantages and limitations. Furthermore, I explore how education can contribute to the promotion of equity, diversity, and inclusion. In doing so, I draw on my experiences studying in Canada, as well as my experiences at Ochanomizu University.

2. Two Remedies - Affirmative Justice and Transformative Justice -

In this part, I explain the difficulties of EDI through the four-month experience in Canada. Last year, I participated in the international exchange program at Western University, one of the top ten universities in Canada. Especially, I took part in the courses of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies. And I learned history and theory as well as practice in the fields of equity, diversity, and human rights along with various areas of law which affect women in specific ways.

One difficulty I found throughout these courses and the experiences in a diverse environment is that EDI has different types of approaches depending on categories of objects, including sexuality, race, gender, and class. Especially, these approaches are often divided into two types; affirmative

justice/action and transformative justice/action. Let me explain them one by one and distinguish between the two remedies.

Firstly, affirmative justice/action, also called "positive action", refers to "remedies aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes of social arrangement without disturbing the underlying framework that generates them"⁽²⁾. It can be seen from the quota system in politics and targeted advertising campaigns for minorities, such as LGBTQA+ and ethnic groups. It leads to the resolution of discrimination related to race, religion, gender, and nationality.

Secondly, transformative justice/action refers to "remedies aimed at correcting inequitable outcomes precisely by restructuring the underlying generative framework"⁽²⁾. This action has been historically associated with socialism, redistribution of wealth by transforming the underlying political-economic structure, which would also change the social division of labor and thus the conditions of existence for everyone.

To illustrate the distinction of these two ways of solution, let me consider the case of sexuality, for example, heterosexism. On the one hand, affirmative action aims to solve it by revaluing and recognizing the gay or lesbian identities and building multiculturalism of sexuality. Transformative action, on the other hand, attempts to eliminate the difference between homosexuality and heterosexuality by restabilizing all of sexual identities.

As we can see from this example and the explanation of these two remedies, affirmative action is often associated with cultural injustice. By contrast, transformative action is considered to be effective on economic and political injustice. I believe we should understand that approaches have different effects on society, and consider the suitable remedies for each problem.

However, these two types of remedies have different advantages and drawbacks, which make it difficult to understand the authentic meaning of EDI and achieve authentic equity, diversity and inclusion for everyone.

Affirmative action/justice is often criticized as reverse discrimination. For instance, the quota systems in politics are regarded as illegal in some countries because they are seen as violating formal equality through unequal treatment. Also, the action in universities that increase opportunities for racial and ethnic minority groups is sometimes exposed to the critique that it is reverse discrimination for majority people. But, affirmative action should be understood as a tool that fills the unfair gaps and aims for substantive equality. Gaps based on race, gender and class exists and cannot be filled with only individual efforts. For example, if the quota system in politics which increases the percentage of women's candidates is introduced in Japan, this system does not aim to just raise the amount of women's candidates. It would be implemented for the reason that it is difficult for women to be active in politics because of the influence of entrenched tendency. Although the quota system has other problems from some perspectives, such an affirmative justice helps people who cannot stand

at the same starting line as others because of structural conditions.

However, this justice has limits that it can correct the outcome but it cannot change the radical social structure creating the gaps. Tracy E. Ore, professor of Sociology at St. Cloud State University, states that the factors of the gaps including gender, race and class are not natural and they are produced because the society gives values to the differences among people⁽³⁾. This process is called "social construction of difference". It includes mainly five steps; It picks an arbitrary trait, groups entities that share the trait, contrasting them with others who do not share a trait, assigning values and justifying unequal value in social practice or narrative. Finally, it causes hierarchies and controls the opportunities in the society, which leads to the access to material assets and status. Although I do not think we should stop finding differences and valuing them, I believe that the differences should not be hierarchically compared with others' traits or used to justify inequality.

By contrast, transformative action/justice not only compensates the inequality but also transforms the social structure at the level of the individual, community and society. For instance, when we deal with the problem related to class, with transformative remedy we attempt to reduce capitalist exploitation and commodification or retooling for green economy. Transformative justice also would enable us to provide comprehensive social welfare that makes people live equally. In terms of the inequality in race, it can be solved by making race immaterial in determining life choice. This does not mean denying racial identities, but rather restructuring social institutions so that access to education, employment, and political participation is no longer shaped by racial categorization.

Although transformative justices would eliminate these inequalities from the society, it has disadvantages; First of all, it takes an extremely long time to achieve the goals so that we cannot get the result in the short term. Second, it has a big political and social limit which makes us build consensus. Considering the previous examples again, the problem related to class can be solved by redistribution of wealth and assets, often called socialism, but the economic system would become unstable and cause social confusion. Moreover, the remedy would generate new orders and hierarchy even if wealth is redistributed, as the authority would be centralized in government. Thus, systems created through transformative justice can be criticized for potentially restricting individual freedom and control over wealth, as they often require strong state intervention, centralized redistribution, and extensive regulation of economic and social life.

Ultimately, there is no universal or perfect solution to issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Different social problems require different approaches, and it is therefore essential to select remedies according to the specific context and nature of inequality. More importantly, the action of attempting to address injustice should be valued. Although such efforts may involve risks and unintended consequences, if decisions are made through careful consideration, failures should be understood as part of a learning process. By minimizing harm and continuously improving policies and practices,

societies can move closer to more inclusive and equitable outcomes.

3. Two Abilities Required to Promote EDI Program

In order to promote equity, diversity, and inclusion, education should cultivate two essential capacities: the ability to develop a structural understanding of society and critical thinking skills that raises a question to what is often taken for granted.

First, developing a structural understanding of society is crucial for EDI. I believe that EDI requires us to view both society and individuals objectively and from a broad perspective. Rather than accepting a single opinion or fact uncritically, it is important to understand the relationships among various social factors, their historical backgrounds, and the underlying structures that shape social realities. By doing so, social issues can be examined from multiple perspectives instead of a single viewpoint. This kind of understanding enables flexible thinking and advanced problem-solving skills, which are essential for addressing EDI issues that cannot be solved by uniform or simplistic solutions.

To cultivate this capacity, education in social studies—such as civics, history, and geography—is indispensable. Discrimination and inequality are not isolated or accidental phenomena; they are structural problems that have been repeatedly produced throughout history. Through my experiences in studying history both in secondary education and at university, as well as through my study-abroad experience, I realized that reflecting on the past helps us understand why EDI emerged and what social significance and value it has. Learning how historical events are connected to present social conditions and future possibilities deepened my understanding of contemporary inequality.

In addition, educational curricula should allow students to study a wide range of academic fields without being restricted by the traditional division between the humanities and sciences. Such interdisciplinary learning encourages students to adopt multiple perspectives, broadens their horizons, and strengthens their ability to make objective and structural judgments.

Second, critical thinking—the ability to question assumptions and challenge what is considered “normal”—is another essential capacity fostered through education. My own understanding of EDI changed significantly before and after studying abroad. For someone who had never lived outside Japan, encountering different cultures, values, and social norms challenged many assumptions that I had unconsciously accepted as natural. This experience helped me realize how strongly one’s understanding of society is shaped by their environment.

Similarly, through my school and extracurricular activities, such as participating in student organizations, I learned the importance of revising existing systems and rules in response to changing situations. These experiences taught me that questioning established practices and creating new frameworks are essential not only in academic fields but also in building a better society. In the context

of EDI, where initiatives are increasingly facing criticism, such critical reflection is particularly important to prevent stagnation and misunderstanding.

To foster critical thinking skills, education should promote greater interaction both domestically and internationally. Expanding opportunities for overseas study, encouraging international exchanges, and facilitating online collaboration with partner institutions can expose students to diverse perspectives. Through these experiences, students can learn to question assumptions, reconsider dominant norms, and contribute to the development of more inclusive and equitable societies.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this report has shown that equity, diversity, and inclusion are complex issues that cannot be addressed through a single, universal solution. Affirmative and transformative approaches serve different purposes and produce different effects depending on the type of inequality being addressed. While affirmative action can reduce immediate disparities, it often cannot fully change the underlying structures that create inequality, whereas transformative justice aims to address these root causes but faces significant social and political constraints.

Therefore, flexible and context-sensitive approaches to EDI are essential. In this process, education plays a crucial role by fostering structural understanding and critical thinking. By learning to analyze social issues from multiple perspectives and question taken-for-granted assumptions, individuals can engage more thoughtfully with EDI and contribute to the ongoing pursuit of a more inclusive and equitable society.

5. References

- (1) Brandon Drenon. BBC News. 2 March 2025. available at:
<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c24110m30ddo>
- (2) Nancy Fraser. 1997. "Chapter 1: From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a "Postsocialist" Age." In *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition*. New York, NY: Routledge: pages 13-23
- (3) Ore, T. E. (2023). *The social construction of difference and inequality : race, class, gender, and sexuality* (Eighth edition.). Oxford University Press.

Understanding EDI Through My Various Experiences

2410145
Ochanomizu University

Content

Three experiences

- 01 Summer Program
- 02 Global Internship
- 03 Studying in Canada

Conclusion

What EDI is throughout my experiences

01 Summer Program

DI

Experiences of discussing with people who have different backgrounds

Struggle with expressing opinions
→ One of my group members supported me to voice out.



- **Diversity of leadership** "We all are unique. We should recognize and value leaders who listen more and demonstrate empathy."
- **Meaning of Inclusion** To think about the difference and take actions in order to understand each other

02 Global Internship

What is Global Internship?

- September last year
- Work experience in IDP Education for 2 weeks
- Interaction with an international exchange student from Korea, Yerin



My host company: IDP Education

- Managing the IELTS exam and supports its candidates
- Headquartered in Australia
- More than 10 offices in Japan
- Global cooperation



- Two experiences**
- 1. RAQDA project
 - 2. Japan's R U OK? DAY

02 Global Internship

E

RAQDA project

- = to install sanitary product dispensers, called "Seripon."
- "Q" in the name of LAQDA project:
Aim to pose women's problems to everyone in society and solve them together by setting dispensers
- Setting "Seripon" on the washroom in the test center



Awareness

- **Equity for women who get a period during tests**
 - Access to sanitary products is an issue of fairness and performance of the exam
 - **Mitigation of the inequity for women** by physical reasons, menstruation
- **Importance of conversation about menstruation**
 - Creating an environment where **people feel comfortable discussing their worries and problem easily**



02 Global Internship

I

Japan's "R U OK?" Day

- Australian national day of action for mental health awareness through asking "R U OK?"
- Organizing online event with members who work various areas in Japan
- Purpose of this event: Conveying the importance of "staying connected" with each others



Awareness

- **Importance of daily small conversation**
 - Difficulty in knowing the others' situations online
 - An effort to build connection and a sense of support each other
- **"It is OK not to be OK"**
 - Increasing the feeling of "supporting each other"
 - It is OK not to be perfect, but to rely upon others



03 Studying in Canada

DI

University of Western Ontario

- Ranked 10th as a best university in Canada
- 12 faculties and more than 400 combinations of undergraduate fields



Awarenesses

- **The Reason why Canada is said to be egalitarian country**
 - Gender studies about Women, Law, and Social Change
 - Understanding history of discrimination → foster perspectives of inclusion
Ex) the forced sterilization of women, exclusion of Asian immigrant and Indigenous people
 - **Existence of cruel histories motivated people to transform the country better**
- **Importance of finding communities in the unknown area**
 - different environment from Japan confused me
 - Language barrier caused difficulty in fitting in the new environment
 - **Joining the communities gave me the feeling of acceptance in Canada**
Ex) ISA, Friends from Asian countries, and Badminton club



Conclusion -What is EDI?-

Equity

Existing the environment where everyone can maximize their potential

Diversity

Distinguishing the unique characteristics through the backgrounds and understanding of the differences each other

Inclusion

Integrating a variety of groups and people into one society by connecting with and caring others

Challenges of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and the Role of Education

T.Watanabe (Ochanomizu University, JAPAN)

I studied abroad at Western University in London, Ontario, Canada, for one semester, from August 26 to December 23, 2025. Canada is internationally known as a multicultural and multiethnic country, and in recent years it has accepted over 400,000 new immigrants annually. Within Canada, Ontario is particularly active in welcoming immigrants, accepting approximately 190,000 immigrants in 2024 alone.

Living for four months in a society with a racial and ethnic structure fundamentally different from that of Japan, and drawing on both my university coursework and my everyday experiences, this paper explores contemporary issues of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and considers how education can contribute to the promotion of EDI in modern society.

During my study abroad, in addition to forming new communities with local students in order to update my understanding of Canadian lifestyles and social norms, I actively used social media to gather information. As a result, the algorithm of the digital devices I was using learned that I was studying abroad and began to display a large amount of content related to studying overseas and cross-cultural experiences. Much of this content was framed as a comparison between Japan and other countries and tended to evaluate them in terms of “good” versus “bad.”

Many of these posts employed so-called outrage-based marketing, often offering simplified and explicit criticism of countries outside Japan, particularly China. The more extreme the content, the more active the comment sections became, and the higher the number of views it received.

Japan was formed as a nation-state with a strong tendency to clearly distinguish between the “inside” and the “outside” of the nation. Why is this the case? One explanation lies in the process of modernization, during which people of non-Japanese racial or ethnic backgrounds were marginalized as “exceptions,” while Japan came to be narrated as a nation consisting of a single ethnic group. Although globalization and global education have increased the emphasis on “tolerance toward diversity” in recent years, exclusionary attitudes toward foreigners remain deeply embedded in public opinion.

One of the most prominent recent topics in Japan has been the inauguration of the country’s first female prime minister under the Takaichi administration. Among her supporters, there are not a few who express expectations for stricter regulations on foreigners. Foreign residents are often subject to criticism from Japanese society, with complaints about manners frequently cited as a primary reason.

In the July 2025 House of Councillors election, the Sanseitō party achieved significant electoral gains. Its leader, Mr. Kamiya, has promoted a “Japanese First” platform and called for stronger enforcement against foreigners, a message that has attracted considerable support, particularly among younger generations.

While the weak yen and rising prices have placed increasing strain on the Japanese population, it is worth questioning whether blaming foreigners truly addresses the root causes of these issues. Rather, the current situation suggests that foreigners have become scapegoats for domestic dissatisfaction within Japanese society. From my perspective, there is no future in which Japan—facing a declining population—can sustain itself without coexistence with foreign residents.

However, the perspective of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), which is essential for such coexistence, is sometimes framed negatively as an imposed demand for tolerance toward others. Although awareness of EDI has spread, the actual practices necessary for multicultural and multiethnic coexistence have not sufficiently followed, leaving this gap as an unresolved social issue. Through a comparison with Canada, my study-abroad destination, I propose the hypothesis that Japan—and the world more broadly—is currently struggling with a distorted or unstable understanding of what EDI truly entails

Due to population decline, labor shortages in Japan are more pronounced in regional and rural areas than in major urban centers. To compensate for this shortage, foreign labor has become increasingly important and will continue to be so in the future. As of the end of October 2025, the number of foreign workers in Japan reached approximately 2.3 million. This figure includes professionals, technical intern trainees, and international students working part-time, and accounts for about 3 percent of the total employed population in Japan.

When examining the proportion of foreign workers within the labor force of major developed countries based on data from the OECD and national statistics, the figures are approximately 18 percent in the United States, 19 percent in Australia, 19 percent in the United Kingdom, and 15 percent in Germany. Compared with these countries, Japan’s proportion is clearly not high. Nevertheless, issues related to foreigners are frequently highlighted within Japan and often provoke public opposition.

Such concerns include crime and public safety, increased pressure on social security systems, and cultural friction arising from language barriers and differences in customs. Among these issues, the most immediate and tangible in everyday life is language-based communication. The barrier of “not being able to communicate in Japanese” not only excludes people from interaction but also makes mutual understanding, which is essential for multicultural coexistence more difficult.

With regard to public safety, the situation involving Kurdish residents in Kawaguchi City is often cited as an example, where concerns have been raised about increases in illegal residency and false asylum claims, as well as crimes such as theft and assault, contributing to heightened anxiety among

local residents.

Compared to Japan, Canada is a multicultural society and a country that is generally tolerant of diversity. I may simply have been lucky, but during the four months I studied abroad, I did not experience any obvious or explicit discrimination. Because Canada has a large immigrant population, it may be more accustomed to people from overseas and therefore more accepting. I also felt a difference in attitudes toward language compared to Japan. I frequently saw not only English but also French on signs. In addition, depending on the region—particularly in British Columbia, where many Indigenous peoples still live today—Indigenous languages were also displayed.

Up to this point, although it was difficult for someone like me, who had taken the use of Japanese for granted while living in Japan, to imagine, I came to realize that handling language means handling culture. I believe this realization came from the fact that Canada is a country that deals with multiple languages. The central role that language plays in culture can be seen in important moments in Canada's modern history. In the residential school system imposed on Indigenous peoples, Indigenous children were prohibited from using their own languages over a long period of time. From the 19th century to the late 20th century, children were separated from their homelands and became victims of assimilation policies. As a result, they lost the ability to understand their original languages, and the transmission of their unique cultures was cut off. This has been recognized as cultural genocide. This history clearly demonstrates the cultural significance of language and led me to understand that language itself is culture.

From another perspective, I would like to consider the uniqueness of language. In communication, English is widely recognized as the world's common language, or *lingua franca*. Even if English is not one's first language, being able to speak English is an advantage. However, beyond English alone, attempting to speak another person's language is effective in promoting mutual understanding. Just as I would feel warmth if someone spoke Japanese to me while I was abroad, learning languages other than English is not a requirement in international society, yet it is deeply moving when someone makes the effort to learn them.

As mentioned earlier, English, French, and Indigenous languages are commonly seen in Canada, but many other languages also filled the streets. Based on my personal experience, the most familiar was Chinese. In London, Ontario, where I studied, I rarely encountered Japanese people, but there were many immigrants from Asia, particularly China. I also often saw people of Middle Eastern background. Among the friends I made at university, some told me that their parents had immigrated to Canada and that they themselves were born there. There are many second-generation immigrants, such as Canadian Chinese, and I felt that immigrants had become an integral part of Canadian society. While general communication is conducted in English, people use their home country languages within their own communities. A bilingual or multilingual environment is not unusual in Canada. Through this, I strongly felt that language vividly represents one's roots.

During my stay in Canada, many Chinese people greeted me in Japanese or talked to me about anime they knew. While I was in Canada, Sanae Takaichi was appointed Prime Minister and relations between Japan and China worsened. However, at the individual level, as long as political topics were avoided, people with Chinese roots were very kind to me.

I had expected that leaving Japan would strengthen my identity as a Japanese person. However, because my study abroad destination was Canada and I lived in North America rather than Asia, alongside the awareness that “I am Japanese,” I also developed an awareness that “I am Asian.” While living in Japan, I had not formed strong images of neighboring countries, but through interactions with Asian friends at my host university, I developed a sense of familiarity and reassurance toward people with Asian roots. When comparing Japan with each Asian country individually, the differences are of course clear. However, when contrasted with Europe or North America, although the atmosphere is entirely different, there are certain commonalities within Asia. One is physical appearance—similar bone structures and facial features created a sense of familiarity. Even within the same country, Canada, differences in perception arise depending on whether someone is of Asian or European descent. For example, when I struggled to clearly express my opinions, I felt that people of Asian background tended to try to read what I was attempting to say and demonstrated a stronger tendency toward implicit understanding or “reading the air.”

From here, I would like to consider how education contributes to the promotion of EDI. Compared to Japan, I felt that Canada, my study abroad destination, had many immigrants and a great deal of diversity. However, I also learned about many challenges that I had not known about before studying abroad. The most significant of these is the residential school system discussed earlier. The wounds this historical reality left on Canada remain deep even today. An important issue is how Canada confronts this history of genocide and how it conveys this history accurately to its citizens and future generations. Canada has a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, which commemorates the victims of the residential school system and promotes recognition of the truth and reconciliation. This day occurred during my study abroad period, and during that time, classes addressed the topic of residential schools. We learned about the history and exchanged opinions with other students. I sensed that this was an extremely sensitive issue for Canadians.

In addition to establishing it as a memorial day, many educational institutions included a Land Acknowledgement at the beginning of syllabi and official events. This is a declaration that acknowledges the land as belonging to Indigenous peoples and recognizes that we are borrowing it. By embedding the reconciliation process into educational settings in this way, understanding of residential schools and, more broadly, EDI was promoted at a national level. Every country has painful histories, but I came to believe that the power of education is essential in accepting those histories and fostering public understanding.

Reference

出井広博（閲覧日 2026 年 1 月 15 日）〈急浮上する外国人問題〉「多文化共生」って簡単に言うな！「排外主義」に陥らないためにも原因の直視を [Wedge ONLINE\(ウェッジ・オンライン\)](https://wedge.ismedia.jp/articles/-/38654) <https://wedge.ismedia.jp/articles/-/38654>

閲覧日 2026 年 1 月 15 日「外国人雇用状況」の届出状況まとめ（令和 6 年 10 月末時点） | 厚生労働省 https://www.mhlw.go.jp/stf/newpage_50256.html

牧田 健「激化する外国人労働者獲得競争」（閲覧日 2026 年 1 月 17 日）[2012 No](https://www.jri.co.jp/MediaLibrary/file/report/viewpoint/pdf/15226.pdf)
<https://www.jri.co.jp/MediaLibrary/file/report/viewpoint/pdf/15226.pdf>

増田貴彦「文化と認知研究の新展開：東アジア文化圏の包括的認知傾向と北米文化圏の分析的認知傾向」

Olivia B(2026 January 8) Canadian Statics [Immigration Statistics in Canada for 2024 | Made in CA](https://madeinca.ca/immigration-canada-statistics/)
<https://madeinca.ca/immigration-canada-statistics/>

BEYOND BACKGROUNDS: CULTIVATING UNDERSTANDING IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Ochanomizu University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- My Academic Experience
- EDI in daily life
- What makes Canada diverse?
- important Issues
- Today's Support for Indigenous Peoples
- The Key of EDI from the perspective of My Study Abroad



MY ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

Western University, Canada

Fall Term
[August 26 - December 23]

Faculty
Arts & Humanities

Courses

- Sociology
- Gender Studies
- etc

I've learned about EDI (Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) during my exchange program !

EDI IN DAILY LIFE

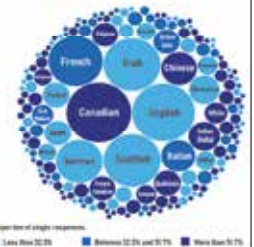
- OWeek (Orientation Week)
- Global Café
- Peer Guide Network
- Dormitory/Shared house



42,978 students include
5,445 **international students** from **134 countries**

- Japanese Student Association
- Black Students' Association
- Chinese Students' Association
- African Students' Association
- Caribbean Students' Organization

CANADA A MULTICULTURAL NATION



What makes Canada diverse?



- Indigenous peoples
- French and British colonial legacy
- A large immigrant population (India, Chinese, French, etc.)

IMPORTANT ISSUES

RELATED TO CANADA'S DIVERSITY

- indigenous people (Inuit, etc)
- Historical injustices (residential schools, land dispossession)

TODAY'S SUPPORT FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- Using Indigenous languages on public signs
- Education about the history of Residential Schools
- Respect for Indigenous art and culture

- Land Acknowledgement
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation

THINKING ABOUT THE KEY OF EDI FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF MY STUDY ABROAD

- Harmony did not exist from the beginning.
- Recognizing history through education.
- Reflecting on the past to avoid repeating it.

Education with EDI

S.Sado (Ochanomizu University, JAPAN)

Introduction

In recent years, the concepts of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) have become central to discussions about the role of education in addressing social inequalities.

Education is not only a system for transmitting knowledge, but also a powerful social institution that shapes values, attitudes and opportunities. When designed and practiced thoughtfully, education can reduce structural disadvantages, promote mutual understanding, and create environments in which diverse individuals are able to participate fully.

This essay focuses on the issue of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and considers how education can contribute to their promotion. Drawing on my study abroad experience at the University of East Anglia (UEA), I reflect on how EDI was embedded in both everyday campus life and academic learning. By examining concrete experiences, as well as their strengths and limitations, this essay argues that education plays a crucial role in advancing EDI when it combines inclusive practices, equitable support systems and opportunities for critical reflection. By reflecting on both positive experiences and moments of difficulty, this essay aims to demonstrate that EDI in education is not a fixed outcome, but an ongoing process that requires continuous awareness, adaptation and dialogue.

1. Diversity in Everyday Campus Life

One of the most immediate ways I experienced EDI was through everyday campus life. Diversity was not presented merely as a concept or slogan of the university, but was embedded in ordinary routines such as food, social spaces and student organizations.

For example, the campus cafeteria offered menu items that changed daily and included Asian, European, Middle Eastern and Indian dishes. Vegetarian and vegan options were always available, reflecting respect for students' religious beliefs, health needs, and ethical values. Through these everyday practices, the university acknowledged that students come from different cultural and social backgrounds, rather than expecting everyone to adapt to a single dominant norm.

This form of visible diversity had clear strengths. For international students, seeing cultures and lifestyles recognized helped reduce feelings of isolation and made it easier to feel accepted. Food is closely connected to identity and emotional well-being, and having culturally sensitive options contributes to a sense of belonging.

At the same time, it encouraged students to explore unfamiliar cuisines and cultures, creating informal opportunities for intercultural exchange outside the classroom.

During my stay in the UK, I was personally surprised by how common vegetarian and vegan options were, as well as by the number of people who followed these diets. Compared to Japan, where such options are still limited, the UK campus environment initially felt very inclusive and progressive. However, this perception was challenged through a conversation with my Canadian roommate. She shared that, from her perspective, the UK offered fewer vegetarian and vegan options than Canada. This difference in perception revealed how understandings of “diversity” are always relative and shaped by one’s cultural and national background. Furthermore, after returning to Japan, I shared this experience with people around me and realized that some held misconceptions about vegetarianism. Several people believed that being vegetarian simply meant avoiding meat for personal health reasons, rather than recognizing it as a choice often rooted in ethical concerns for animal welfare, environmental sustainability, or religious beliefs. This moment made me acutely aware of how levels of awareness and cultural understanding differ across societies. What is considered common knowledge in one country may be misunderstood or overlooked in another.

However, I also became aware of the limitations of diversity expressed mainly through cultural representation. While exposure to different foods and festivals increased awareness of cultural differences, it did not automatically lead to a deeper understanding of social inequalities or historical contexts. Simply knowing that diverse cultures exist does not explain why certain groups experience systemic disadvantages or how historical power relations have shaped present inequalities. This realization highlighted an important role of education in promoting EDI: education must move beyond surface-level diversity and actively encourage critical thinking about the structural and historical causes of inequality. This experience helped me realize that diversity alone does not guarantee equity or inclusion. While cultural visibility is an important first step, education must go further by encouraging students to question why inequalities exist and how they are reproduced in society. In this sense, education plays a critical role in moving students from passive appreciation for diversity toward active, critical engagement with social justice issues.

2. Inclusion through Community and Campus Support

Inclusion at UEA was strongly reflected in the ways students were supported both socially and emotionally. The university has a large international student population, and cultural diversity is highly visible on campus. Events such as Indian cultural festivals were held openly, allowing students from different backgrounds to learn about one another’s traditions. Importantly, these events were not limited to specific cultural groups but were designed as shared experiences for the wider campus community. UEA also provided physical spaces that promoted inclusion, such as cafes and study areas

specifically designed for international students. These spaces made it easier to communicate freely, meet others, and build friendships without fear of exclusion.

In addition, the support systems at UEA felt genuinely accessible.

Professors and administrative staff were approachable and responsive, particularly through email, and asking for help felt natural rather than intimidating. This reduced the psychological barriers that often prevent students from seeking academic or personal support.

The strength of this inclusive environment was that it lowered barriers to participation and encouraged students to engage more actively in university life.

However, I also recognized that inclusion partly depended on individual initiative.

Students who were shy, less confident in English, or unfamiliar with participatory academic cultures could still struggle to fully engage. This highlighted an important limitation of inclusion in practice: even when support systems exist, not all students are able to access them equally. Education therefore has a responsibility to continuously reflect on whose voices are being heard and whose may remain marginalized. True inclusion requires ongoing efforts to reach students who may be less visible or less confident, rather than assuming that equal access automatically leads to equal participation.

3. Equity in Academic Life and Learning Environment

Equality at UEA was particularly evident in the academic environment. I felt that students were treated with fairness and respect regardless of nationality or background. Professors were approachable, and the distance between students and teachers was relatively small, which encouraged open communication and active participation. Rather than relying solely on lectures, many classes were practical and experience-based, often using nature, fieldwork and real-world examples to support learning.

In global development courses, students worked in diverse teams to discuss international issues. International students were fully included in group work and field trips, which made learning feel shared rather than hierarchical.

This approach reflected an equity-oriented mindset: instead of expecting all students to succeed in identical ways, the learning environment provided multiple opportunities for contribution and expression.

At the same time, this learning environment revealed certain challenges.

Differences in academic culture, communication styles, and expectations sometimes led to misunderstandings in group work. While these moments could be uncomfortable, they also become valuable learning experiences. With guidance from instructors, students learned to negotiate differences and support one another. This reinforced my understanding that equity in education does not mean removing all difficulties but rather providing the support necessary for students to navigate those difficulties fairly.

4. Events, Reflection, and Belonging

UEA actively created opportunities for students to connect with others through events and community activities. Weekly field trips, Welcome Week programs, and various workshops were designed to help students build relationships and feel a sense of belonging. One particularly memorable lecture focused on the importance of keeping a diary, emphasizing reflection and mental well-being. This highlighted how education can support not only academic development but also emotional and psychological growth. These events strengthened students' sense of belonging by recognizing them as individuals rather than simply as learners. Feeling emotionally supported made it easier for students to participate academically and socially. For international students adjusting to a new environment, this sense of care was especially important.

However, I also became aware that participation in such events requires time, energy, and sometimes confidence. Students balancing heavy coursework or personal responsibilities might find it difficult to attend extracurricular activities. This raised important questions about accessibility. From this perspective, education promotes inclusion not only by offering opportunities, but also by considering how those opportunities can be made realistically accessible to diverse students. Without such consideration, well-intentioned initiatives may unintentionally exclude those who are already under pressure.

5. Academic Reflection: Learning International Development and EDI

Studying International Development at UEA had a profound impact on how I understand equity, diversity and inclusion at a global level. One topic that significantly changed my perspective was colonialism. Before taking this course, I tended to view colonialism simply as occupation and historical injustice. While this understanding was not incorrect, it was limited.

Through lectures, readings and discussions, I learned that colonial history is complex and continues to shape contemporary societies. Colonialism caused deep harm, exploitation, and long-lasting inequalities, particularly for colonized populations.

At the same time, it also influenced present-day economic systems, educational structures, and political institutions. Examining colonialism from multiple perspectives required us to consider not only moral judgements, but also historical contexts and ongoing structural effects. This learning process demonstrated how education can promote EDI by encouraging students to move beyond simple narratives of good and bad. By engaging with multiple perspectives, including those of marginalized groups, education fosters critical thinking, empathy, and deeper understanding of global inequality. I strongly felt that education's contribution to EDI lies in its ability to cultivate their analytical and reflective skills, which are essential for building more inclusive societies.

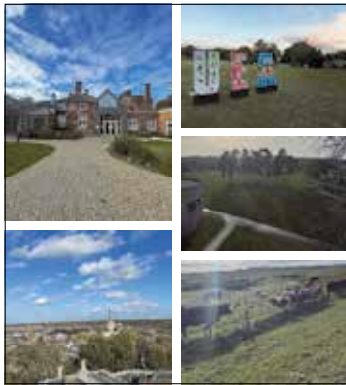
Conclusion

In conclusion, my study-abroad experiences demonstrated that education plays a vital role in promoting equity, diversity and inclusion. Through participation in EDI program, I experienced firsthand how inclusive educational practices can transform learning environments. These experiences deepened my understanding of social inequalities and highlighted the importance of equity-oriented approaches in education.

Education is not neutral; it can either reproduce existing inequalities or serve as a catalyst for social change. My reflections suggest that when education prioritizes EDI, it empowers students to become more aware, empathetic, and engaged members of society. As global interconnectedness continues to grow, the role of education in fostering inclusive and equitable communities will become increasingly important.

The lessons I learned while studying abroad will continue to shape my academic journey and my perspective on the responsibilities of educational institutions in promoting equity, diversity and inclusion. Moreover, this experience of studying abroad encouraged me to reflect on my own position and responsibility within diverse societies.

Experiencing EDI in practice helped me to realize that inclusion is not something provided only by institutions, but also something created through everyday interactions among individuals. Education that emphasizes EDI therefore has the potential to shape not only knowledgeable graduates, but also socially responsible citizens. By fostering critical awareness, respect for difference, and a willingness to engage with uncomfortable questions, education can contribute to long-term social change beyond the classroom. In this sense, the value of EDI-oriented education extends far beyond university life and continues to influence how individuals act within increasingly diverse global communities.



Agenda

- Why I chose UEA
- Equity
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- What I learned in DEV
- Summary

Why I choose here is ...

- **Location** Norwich, Norfolk
- **Course** Global Development

Perspectives on global development
Big questions for people and planet
Understanding the business environment

- **International** 2820 /16872 students (18%)

University of East Anglia

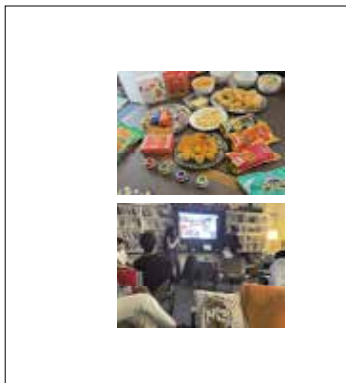


Equity in learning environment

- Professors are approachable and supportive
- Seminar – group discussion in a small group, explanation of assignments –
- Field trip – practical experience and learning –

Diversity in daily life

- The menu in cafeteria changes everyday (Asian, European and Indian dishes)
- Vegetarian & Vegan options are available
- wide range of societies



Inclusion on Campus

- Many international students
- Cafés and spaces where international students can meet and study
- Cultural event
- Supportive environment; email communication & guidance

What I learned in my course

~ Studies colonialism from new perspectives ~

Before coming : Colonialism = historical occupation and harm

Now : the way for developing economically and to promote social thriving and education systems

→ understanding both negative impacts and benefits = critical

Summary

- Equal access to opportunities
- Diverse campus life
- Inclusive support system

→ UEA is a place where difference are embraced valued

“ Do Different !! ”

How Education Promotes Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

K.Owada (Ochanomizu University, JAPAN)

Introduction

In recent years, the concepts of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) have gained increasing attention in educational institutions, workplaces, and broader society. EDI refers to fairness in access to opportunities, respect for differences, and the creation of environments where all individuals feel valued and supported. Education plays a critical role in moving EDI beyond abstract ideas by providing opportunities to reflect on social structures and engage with diverse perspectives.

Through EDI-related coursework, the participation in a summer program focusing on sustainability, and my study abroad experience, I came to understand how education can actively promote equity, diversity, and inclusion. Education provided me with the language, frameworks, and experiences needed to recognize inequality and reflect on EDI in both academic and real-life contexts. In this essay, I will primarily reflect on my participation in the summer program, my experience studying abroad at the University of East Anglia (UEA), and my studies in the Global Development course while studying abroad, looking at how education can contribute to promoting EDI.

Understanding EDI Through Education

Education is often the first place people encounter systematic discussions about equity, diversity, and inclusion. In everyday life, people unconsciously accept social norms and inequalities without questioning them. However, education provides an opportunity to critically examine these assumptions. In particular, I feel that my study abroad experience has given me a valuable perspective, and I would say that education has given me a chance to gain a deeper understanding of society.

Learning Diversity Through International Dialogue

I participated in a summer program with students from various countries that focused on sustainability. Through discussions with students, I learned about environmental, social, and political issues in other countries and compared them with the situation in Japan. These conversations helped me realize how national circumstances and personal experiences shape people's perspectives.

One of the most surprising things about the program was how interested the other students were in political issues. Through these discussions, I realized my own limited understanding of Japanese politics. This realization motivated me to learn more and think about my own country. At the same time, I also faced challenges with expressing my opinions in English. Even when I understood the content of the discussion and the other students' perspectives, I struggled to clearly express my thoughts. However, this challenge itself was an important learning experience. It reminded me of the

importance of language accessibility in inclusive education and the need for a supportive environment where students can practice self-expression without fear of criticism.

Although it was only a two-week program, it provided valuable insights that prepared me for my study abroad and demonstrated how even short-term educational programs can promote diversity and inclusion by encouraging intercultural dialogue and self-reflection.

Inclusion and Student Support at the University of East Anglia

One of the most significant examples of inclusion I experienced was during my study abroad program at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England. UEA is a large university that hosts exchange students from many countries, which means that students have different cultural backgrounds, languages, and academic systems. Because of this diversity, the university has developed a strong support system for students.

When I first arrived at UEA, I had many concerns. These included academic issues, such as understanding my modules and course requirements, as well as practical concerns related to daily life, such as where to buy necessary items or how to navigate the campus. The student information center played a crucial role in addressing these concerns. Students could ask questions freely, regardless of how small or personal they might seem, and staff members consistently provided clear and supportive guidance.

Rather than expecting students to adapt independently or struggle by themselves the university recognized that students have different needs and experiences. Importantly, this support was not limited to international students. Any student could access these services, regardless of nationality, background, or academic status. This approach demonstrates how educational institutions can promote inclusion by creating environments where all students feel supported and respected.

From an equity perspective, this support system also helped reduce disadvantages faced by students who might be unfamiliar with the local culture or academic expectations. Equity does not mean treating everyone the same; rather, it involves providing an appropriate support so that everyone has a fair chance to succeed. Through this experience, I realized that education can promote equity not only through curriculum content, but also through institutional practices and support structures.

Daily Observations of Inclusion in Norwich

During my life in Norwich, I also began to see Japan more objectively. I was particularly impressed by the everyday approach to inclusion that extended beyond the university walls. For example, most restaurants and cafes clearly labeled gluten-free, vegetarian, and vegan options. While some choose these diets for health or ethical reasons, for others, it is a matter of religious or biological necessity. This led me to reflect on how limited such options are in Japan and how accessibility is often overlooked in the food industry.

I also noticed the presence of gender-neutral toilets and the open acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals. It was common to see same-sex couples on campus and in the city, living without the need for secrecy or the fear of being "different." These experiences showed me that inclusion is not only shaped by formal policies, but also by social norms that allow people to exist comfortably as they are.

Environmental Diversity and Sustainability as Educational Values

Another important aspect of my experience at UEA was the university's close relationship with nature. The campus is surrounded by green spaces, lakes, and wildlife, creating an environment where students can interact with nature in their daily lives. I believe this environment influences the way people on campus think about environmental conservation and coexistence with other living things.

For example, waste sorting bins were clearly marked across campus, encouraging students to recycle properly. All cafeterias used napkins and wooden cutlery made from 100% recycled materials, and water refill stations were installed throughout campus to reduce plastic waste. I believe these initiatives are not only environmentally friendly, but also educationally effective. By incorporating sustainability into daily life, the university encouraged students to be more conscious of their environmental impact.

Furthermore, I often saw dogs roaming freely with their owners around the lake, as well as rabbits and other animals that lived on campus. These animals seemed to be treated as part of the shared environment, rather than as an obstacle or a nuisance. Living in such an environment rich in environmental diversity allowed me to experience firsthand the importance of coexistence with nature and other living things. This experience deepened my understanding of diversity that transcends human differences and made me aware of the interconnectedness between humans, animals, and the environment.

I believe I would not have realized these things had I stayed in Tokyo, and I would not have gained them without my prior learning about environmental issues, interest, and personal thoughts during the summer program. I also realized that learning and living in an environment that emphasizes sustainability and environmental diversity actually fosters a sense of responsibility and respect for nature.

What I Learned Through Global Development Studies at UEA

During my time at UEA, I primarily took classes related to global development. These classes introduced me to the fundamental theories of development and related them to contemporary global issues such as environmental degradation, post development, and feminism. While I had studied similar topics in Japan, learning from a different academic and cultural context significantly deepened my understanding.

A key lesson I learned is that development is not just a contemporary issue, but is also deeply rooted in historical events such as colonialism and industrialization. Analyzing this historical context allowed me to experience how past power structures have shaped contemporary inequalities. Through my education, I came to understand that development theory is not neutral but reflects specific values, interests, and perspectives. Learning from professors with different academic backgrounds allowed me to approach familiar topics from new perspectives. Even when the content overlapped with what I had previously learned, each class provided me with new insights and frameworks. I felt that this exposure to diverse opinions was essential for students to continue learning.

Also, one of the most valuable skills I acquired through my education at UEA was critical thinking. In many classes, professors emphasized the importance of questioning assumptions, analyzing arguments, and considering diverse perspectives. At the beginning of the semester, I struggled to understand what "thinking critically" truly meant, as I had previously adopted a passive approach to learning. Critical thinking requires actively engaging with material rather than simply memorizing information. Before each class, we were required to read academic papers and articles related to the topic. While this was difficult due to the language barrier and complex vocabulary, my reading and comprehension skills in academic English gradually improved. More importantly, I learned that there are always multiple ways to interpret an issue. By comparing various arguments and perspectives, I formed my own opinion and learned to express it through essays and discussions. Critical thinking encouraged an openness to diverse perspectives and led me to question simplistic or biased explanations.

The Broader Impact of EDI Education

Many companies and organizations today view EDI as a foundation for improvement and innovation. EDI is essential not only for realizing a fair society, but also for building effective and sustainable communities in companies, schools, and other organizations. Against this backdrop, education plays an important role in preparing people to actively engage in diverse environments. As people enter society and interact with a wider range of people, an EDI perspective is crucial. Through education, individuals can develop empathy, communication skills, and the ability to collaborate across differences. Without this foundation, misunderstandings and exclusion are more likely to occur.

In this sense, education also shapes values and attitudes. I believe that by incorporating EDI into education, educational institutions can contribute to creating a more equitable and inclusive society. My own experience also demonstrates the power of EDI education can broaden people's perspectives, question existing assumptions, and deepen understanding of diversity.

Conclusion

By taking EDI-related classes, participating in a summer program with international students, studying abroad at the University of East Anglia, and taking a global development course while studying abroad, I was able to understand how education contributes to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion. Education provides us with the perspectives and mindsets to recognize inequality, respect diversity, and create inclusive environments. It also provides practical experience in translating abstract concepts into everyday action.

Through these experiences, I learned that EDI is not an abstract ideal, but an essential framework for living in an increasingly interconnected world. I hope to continue learning and growing, fueled by the perspectives and knowledge I gained through this program, as well as the valuable experiences and encounters I gained. Furthermore, these experiences have encouraged me to reflect on my own position within society and the responsibilities that come with it. I hope to apply what I have learned not only in academic settings, but also in my future career and everyday interactions, contributing in small but meaningful ways to more equitable and inclusive communities.



DISCOVERIES AND CHALLENGES DURING MY TIME AT UEA

TODAY'S PRESENTATION

- 01 Introduction
- 02 Struggles Before Departure
- 03 My Experience at UEA
- 04 What I Noticed about Sustainability & EDI
- 05 Conclusion



01 INTRODUCTION

Why I decided to join EDI program

- Internship
- Summer program
- Study abroad



It provides great opportunities to meet many people and grow.

02 STRUGGLES BEFORE DEPARTURE

Challenge

- Missed score several times
- Especially speaking (0.5 short)

Struggle

- Anxiety, loneliness
- Friends already preparing to leave
- Lost confidence

Overcome

- Teacher's support
- Continued practice

Success

- Achieved the score in late August
- I finally got the chance to study abroad

03 MY EXPERIENCE AT UEA

Arriving at UEA

- Many welcome events on campus in the first two weeks
- Pushed myself to talk to new people every day
- Became close to three international students
- Took small trips, cooked dinner together weekly, hung out often



03 MY EXPERIENCE AT UEA

Challenge

- Could understand conversations but couldn't join in
- Friends often said: "You're so quiet! You can talk more"
- Felt frustrated and disappointed in myself

What I Tried

- Focused on phrases my friends often used
 - Tried using those phrases myself
 - Kept an English diary every day
- ⇒ Gradually became more comfortable speaking

03 MY EXPERIENCE AT UEA

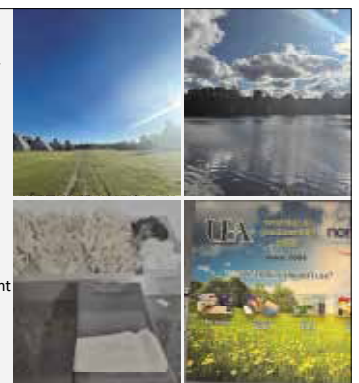
International Café

- Joined weekly "International Café" from November
- Practiced joining big group conversations
- Asked questions and sometimes started topics
- Became a place where I could clearly feel my growth



04 WHAT I NOTICED ABOUT SUSTAINABILITY

- Clear waste separation labels
 - Cafeterias used:
 - 100% recycled paper napkins
 - Wooden cutlery
 - Many water refill stations
- Surrounded by nature
⇒ stronger connection to the environment



04 WHAT I NOTICED ABOUT EDI

Visible practices at UEA

- Clear gluten-free & vegan labels
- Gender-neutral toilets
- Many cultural societies

What I learned

- Equity and Diversity alone is not enough
- Inclusion requires understanding, openness, and everyday actions
- UEA and Norwich showed how a community can truly support everyone



05 CONCLUSION

What I Want to Remember

- **Growth happens when I keep trying**, even when it feels impossible.
- **Stay open to the world.** Every moment can teach me something important.

Living in Diversity

A.Maita (Ochanomizu University, JAPAN)

1. Introduction: From Definitions to Discovery

My journey into the complex world of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) did not begin with a clear roadmap. Before departing for my five-month study abroad program in Sydney, these terms were merely abstract concepts I had encountered in university textbooks. In the relatively homogeneous social landscape of Japan, EDI often feels like a set of corporate buzzwords—standardized phrases used by international organizations that seem far removed from the daily life of an individual student. I understood them intellectually, but I lacked the lived experience to appreciate their necessity in a globalized society.

However, over the course of five months, these dry definitions transformed into a series of survival skills and profound personal realizations. This report follows my journey chronologically, tracing my steps from the initial preparatory challenges in Japan to the intense, transformative reality of living in Sydney. By documenting the friction of cultural collisions and the solace found in one-on-one dialogues, I aim to illustrate how these experiences reshaped my identity and led me to a new understanding of education: not as a means of absorbing information, but as a fundamental process of expanding human choices and fostering deep, data-driven empathy.

2. Phase 1: Foundations in Japan—The First Obstacles

My engagement with EDI began well before I arrived at Sydney airport. In the months leading up to my departure, I participated in two key programs in Japan that served as my first introduction to the challenges of global collaboration.

The Summer Program: Confronting the Linguistic Wall

During the Summer Program in Japan, I participated in my first series of discussions conducted entirely in English, focused on pressing social issues. It was a humbling experience that immediately exposed the gap between my academic knowledge and my practical ability to participate. I found myself surrounded by peers from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Diversity, in this setting, was not just about different passports; it was about the varying "weights" of experience. I remember a discussion on environmental justice where a student from a country directly affected by rising sea levels spoke with a raw urgency that I simply did not possess. In that circle, my English was not a tool for expression but a barrier. I often sat in silence, paralyzed by the speed of the debate. This experience taught me the first hard lesson of Inclusion: it requires more than just an open door; it requires a conscious effort to value and wait for the voices that are

struggling to be heard. It was my first encounter with the idea that true diversity is a collection of intensities, not just categories.

The Biochar Internship: The Challenge of Technical Execution

Immediately after the summer program, I joined a two-week internship at a Japanese company, working on a Biochar pilot project for Ochanomizu University. Our goal was to propose a sustainable system using biochar—a carbon-rich charcoal—to improve soil health on campus.

While I had a vivid imagination for the project's potential, I faced a significant hurdle during the final presentation to company executives and professors. I lacked the specialized English vocabulary required for "technical inclusion." I struggled to explain complex scientific concepts like "carbon sequestration" or "microbial soil health." This taught me that for an idea to be inclusive and persuasive in a professional field, it must be supported by practical, clear, and accessible language. Without a "common language," even the most innovative ideas cannot be shared or implemented. This internship reinforced the idea that education must provide the technical tools necessary to turn abstract dreams into practical, inclusive realities.

3. Phase 2: The Sydney Experience—A New Reality

The lessons I learned in Japan were the foundation, but Sydney was the arena where those lessons were tested. My arrival in Australia was marked by a sudden, jarring shift from theoretical learning to a struggle for survival and belonging.

The Housing Crisis: An Outsider's Resilience

The start of my Sydney life was defined by a major crisis: I failed to secure a spot in the university dormitory. Suddenly, as a newcomer in one of the world's most expensive and competitive rental markets, I was on my own. While local students could rely on their families or their history in the city, I was a true "outsider" with no local references and a limited grasp of the complex rental laws.

The weeks I spent house hunting were some of the loneliest of my life. This was a harsh introduction to a lack of Equity. The system was not designed for someone like me. However, when I finally found a room and signed the lease independently, I felt a surge of power. Successfully navigating this crisis entirely on my own was a major turning point for my self-confidence. It proved that I possessed a level of resilience I had never imagined. My outsider status, which had felt like a weakness, became a source of personal pride. I had built my own place in the city from scratch.

The Buddy Program: Restoring Equity through Dialogue

Once I was settled, the university's Buddy Program offered a much-needed sense of equity. I was matched with a local student, and our weekly one-on-one meetings became a highlight of my experience. In a world of "Equality," every student is treated the same, but the university recognized that I needed specific cultural support to catch up with my peers.

What made these meetings invaluable was the one-on-one environment. In large groups, I often felt the "Lunchtime Wall"- psychological barrier where I felt invisible while others laughed at local jokes I didn't understand. But in our private dialogues, that pressure vanished. My buddy was incredibly honest, even sharing the stereotypes people held toward Japanese people— that we are "polite and organized" but often "quiet and difficult to read." Hearing these honest reflections was eye-opening. It allowed me to step outside my own identity and see how I was perceived by the international community. My buddy provided the "extra chair" I needed to see the same view as everyone else. Through this, I learned that true equity requires the courage to discuss our differences and stereotypes openly and honestly.

UTS and ITPC: Professional Inclusion and Data-Driven Empathy

At the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), I took a Global Internship class where I was the only international student. This could have been another source of isolation, but our work at the Indonesian Trade Promotion Center (ITPC) provided a different path to inclusion. We helped Indonesian food companies understand the "Australian household." I spent hours researching shopping habits, preferences for sustainable packaging, and the health trends of local consumers.

This research taught me a new form of Inclusion: data-driven empathy. By studying the "local other" through market research, I felt more connected to the society I was living in. I realized that learning about someone else's daily life—what they eat, how they shop, what they value—is a powerful way to bridge cultural gaps. It turned my outsider status into a professional advantage, as I could see patterns that local students took for granted.

4. The Practical Test: Inclusion in the Shared Home

My most intimate and difficult lesson in EDI happened in my multicultural share-house. Sharing a living space with people from completely different backgrounds is where the beautiful theories of diversity are tested against the messy reality of daily life.

The biggest challenge was the difference in hygiene standards. Coming from a culture that values extreme cleanliness and quiet in shared spaces, I was shocked by my housemates' habits. A Sink full of dishes and cluttered common areas initially caused me deep irritation. I interpreted their behavior as a personal lack of respect. For weeks, I stayed silent, but my frustration grew into a knot in my stomach. I realized that by remaining silent, I was practicing "self-exclusion"—I was removing myself from the community because I was afraid of the conflict.

I finally decided to act. I put up polite, clear signs (張り紙) in the kitchen. To my surprise, the response was not anger, but a simple: "Oh, I didn't notice." They weren't being disrespectful; they just had a different "standard of normal." By "walking toward them" and negotiating house rules, we found a middle ground. I learned to be more flexible, and they became more mindful. Inclusion, I realized, is not a passive state where everyone just gets along. It is an active, ongoing negotiation of lifestyle, habits, and respect. It requires the courage to break the silence.

5. Synthesis: The Power and Shield of the "Outsider"

Reflecting on my time in both Japan and Sydney, my primary identity was that of an "outsider." I realized that this identity is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it is a position of power. Because I was "literally new," I could bring a "fresh eye" to my design classes and my internship. I could notice the flaws and beauties that locals were too used to seeing. This is why diversity is vital for innovation—outsiders see the gaps.

On the other hand, the outsider identity can be a shield. I sometimes stayed quiet to avoid being judged for my English. I wanted people to be "easy" on me because I was an outsider. True EDI means moving past this shield and finding the courage to participate fully, even if my English is imperfect. I also learned to appreciate the small acts of inclusion—like a shopkeeper using simpler words or a stranger's warm smile. These "Micro-validations" made me realize that I, too, can be the one who offers a "warm smile" to others who are struggling.

6. Conclusion: Education as the Expansion of Choice

Through this chronological journey—from the linguistic struggles in Japan to the survival and social negotiations in Sydney—I have reached a final conclusion: Education is the process of increasing the choices we have in life. Before this program, I only had the choice to see the world through a Japanese lens. Because I faced the housing crisis, I now have the "choice" to be resilient in any city in the world. Because I negotiated with housemates, I now have the "choice" to bridge cultural frictions through dialogue rather than anger. Because I had a buddy, I now have the "choice" to see myself through an international perspective. Education gives us the chance and courage to go beyond the limitation which we think.

Education provides us with the tools to handle reality before we act in it. It allows us to practice empathy and resilience in a safe environment. Achieving EDI is not a goal we finish, but a series of small, daily decisions like a university providing a Buddy Program, a city printing multilingual signs, or an individual deciding to talk to their housemate instead of staying silent. I believe that by simply trying to understand what is happening outside our own borders, we are already building a more inclusive future. I hope this program continues long into the future, providing more students with the chance to expand their world and their choices, just as I have.

THROUGH THE EXPERIENCE OF EDI PROGRAM
Unlocking Opportunities for Environmental Stewardship & Economic Growth

LIVING IN DIVERSITY

“Australia is Diverse Country.”
“But how?”

Key Takeaways

1. Diverse culture and language
2. Efforts for being equity and inclusive
3. “being An outsider”

1. Diverse culture and language

1: Through my experience at internship at ITPC and class

Indonesian Trade Promotion Center

1. Diverse culture and language

2: By observing multicultural city landscape

2. Efforts for being equitable and inclusive

In university:

- learning support system for international/exchange students
- buddy program
- Many kinds of clubs

In street:

- signs written in multiple languages
- Many opportunities to see people having different backgrounds

UTS:HELPS

The Challenges

- Felt strong disability being non-native English speaker
- Need to understand and solve conflict especially in custom

The Opportunity

- Being outsider = having new perspective
- We can break ordinal thinking, common sense, and create something new

3. “BEING AN OUTSIDER”

Inclusivity as a system

Diversity is possible because Australia has strong systems and environments that support equity and inclusion.

Outsider perspectives

Diversity is also possible because outsider perspectives bring new ideas and continually enrich the society.

What makes Australia diverse?

From the Classroom to Around the World

S. Castellanos (Saint Mary's College, U.S.A)

It is not everyday that one gets to travel across the globe to become a part of such a special group of students and educators who provide support, experiences, and education that compare to no other. From the early starts of the 2025 Summer Program to the weekly class of the EDI curriculum, my time at Ochanomizu University and the opportunities that were presented to me, opened my eyes to what EDI can help students and colleagues accomplish. With equity, diversity, and inclusion at the core of this educational program the leaps and bounds made in personal growth have given me the tools to turn around and expand these ideas through real life action. Through this reflective essay of my experiences within the Ochanomizu exchange program and community, I hope to provide a detailed description of the semester's teachings, adventures, and of course of the many once in a life-time moments.

Looking back on my experience as a student of the Ochanomizu University EDI program, I can not help but firstly express my gratitude to the many people who made it possible. When the 2025 Summer Program started, my days were filled with captivating lectures which discussed both modern and historical issues of Japan that later connected to larger global issues at hand. These initial lessons provided students with context of what shaped Japan and its people of today, allowing fellow exchange students to understand and connect to the OchaDai students who also participated in the lectures. With top professors leading these seminars and discussion the content of this program greatly informed me of global issues at hand. This paired with the diversity of students in attendance also allowed me to meet individuals from more than ten countries; a testament to the equity, diversity, and inclusion that OchaDai strived for.

Alongside school work, students were able to take weekend trips outside of Tokyo, giving my classmates and I a chance to see sights such as Kamakura, Enoshima, and much more. Through tea ceremonies, shared meals, and tons of pictures the memories of the Summer Program helped us connect no matter the language barrier or difference in background. It was this cultural immersion that provided an opportunity for growth in both a personal and professional sense as we were able to network, learn, and laugh together. The workshops in between classes additionally gave great insight to the cultural history of Japan as we learned about the importance of ceremonial incense, Kyogen performances, and a Wagashi making class. Side by side not only in class and work but also in personal connection with each classmate helped create inclusion and support amongst each group. This structure served as team bonding which ultimately came together in our final presentations where we each expressed issues happening within our respective home countries and finding common ground, prompting us to figure out solutions together.

It was here in the summer program where I felt that the issues of EDI were directly addressed and discussed as the eyes and perspectives of a wide range of people were all in one place together. That achievement on its own helped us all open our eyes to the difference of our world and the issues that we all face at varying degrees of impact. From climate change, education, and language we each held our own individual values that were shared amongst each other in the hopes of connecting and understanding that we are not that different from each other. In my opinion, I think it is easy to get wrapped up in the politics and perspectives of one's home country especially if traveling and firsthand experience is a limited opportunity. But growing up, I was more than fortunate enough to have access to all sorts of media ranging from books, movies, and music. These simple interests opened the doors to so much more as they allowed me to learn of far away places, people who were not like me, and parts of history that connected and divided the world. If it were not for my education the chances of me being enlightened of such issues like equity, diversity, and inclusion would have been very limited. Education and its institutions such as Ochanomizu University serve as testaments to bettering the understanding of the world around us and recognize that individuality should not equate to division but rather a reason to get to know one another.

This bridging the gap approach helped prepare my fellow EDI students and I for our jump into the deep end of cultural immersion and life in Japan. The opportunity of working with both native and international companies within Japan was a chance in a lifetime experience. As we first applied to the program we had to share our background and field of study to which the OchaDai and EDI directors worked diligently to pair us up with companies within our interests. As international and local students were paired together in one on one teams the aspect of building bonds and working together only grew stronger. It tested our understanding, adaptability, and sometimes patience when it came to working towards a common goal. Occasionally struggling with the language barrier, work culture, and tasks assigned to each pair, the training and experience that we received both on sight at our facilities and in everyday life navigation served more than valuable for our future careers. For me, the opportunity to learn the business of marketing in Japan has helped set me apart from other students in my field of study. Not many university students can say they have worked for some of the top companies in one of the world's busiest cities, so for me to be given the chance to learn the processes of producing promotional plans, marketing products, and expanding goals gave me great satisfaction and hands-on experience.

It was this independence in work and education that pushed me to step out of my comfort zone and be as open to any possibilities that arose during my time in Japan. Sometimes it is hard to put yourself out there and try new things, but with the support of the administration and team of OchaDai and my home university, the busy life of Tokyo felt normal due to the trust and independence granted to me and my fellow students. When it came to choosing classes, figuring out scheduling, and project work, the transition between American university and Japanese university life felt natural. Taking classes that I

was interested in with professors who were not only understanding and helpful to our time of transition and learning, the lessons on global affairs, Japanese language, history, and culture, as well as some Irish history, the curriculum provided me with a diverse and rich selection of knowledge. Some standouts from my time in the program include my Studies in English-speaking Languages and Cultures I class taught by Haruko Sensei and my Japanese Language class taught by Hirano Sensei. Both classes taught interesting content of the Irish and Japanese cultures as we looked over historical accounts, ways of life in each country, and modern time transitions that both went through. In my Irish history class I learned of Gaelic, the country's native language, famous literary figures, and pivotal moments that shaped the country. Within my Japanese Language learning class I was able to build the small but mighty foundation of the Japanese alphabets such as Hiragana and Katakana. These building blocks helped my reading and vocabulary skills which in turn enabled me to practice outside the classroom in everyday situations such as reading signs on the train and menus at restaurants. Hirano Sensei was always so encouraging when it came to simply giving it a try in the classroom with vocabulary words, speaking practice, and writing.

Additionally the work of Dr. M, our Facilitation professor was a class that taught many practical skills when it came to managing and interacting with the world around us. One important lesson that I took away from his class was to always look at the facts first. To ask and take a look at what is distinctly true in a situation can reduce initial assumptions and misconceptions of a situation. When taking the time to be in class and participating as an active student both towards your peers and mentors, OchaDai highlights the importance of working together. These classroom environments prove to be spaces of opportunity and potential.

Through this timeline of the 2025 Summer program, EDI internship, and EDI student program, I found myself learning and growing in ways that no regular university classroom could teach me. The true star of the show were the people I met along the way. Sure lectures, guest speakers, and presentations can provide well researched and organized information, but to truly understand the equity, diversity, and inclusion values of the program, it takes the people of the world. Through this testimony I hoped to have conveyed just how impactful OchaDai's team of coordinators, professors, and students truly were to this program. It is not every that one can surround themselves with well educated women, a diverse group of students from across the globe, and immerse themselves into a culture like no other. When it came to addressing issues such as

From Japan to the United States there were many countries I crossed to get there, but I would do it ten million times over if it meant to be a part of a project like this. Ochanomizu University is built on the foundation of educating young women, much like myself, who seek to learn, understand, and act for a better tomorrow. No matter the degree or field of study, students from across the globe had the chance to detach themselves from the labels, stigmas, politics that world leaders and society have set in place. Coming together at such a pivotal point in our lives as we peruse our degrees, I know there

is one thing that we all took away from the EDI Program of Ochanomizu University; when we bridge the gap between ideas and individuals, we plant the seed of change for a better tomorrow taking us closer to the equity, diversity, and inclusivity that the world needs everyday.

EDI Symposium

The Impacts of Intersectionality on Social Accessibility; A Global Perspective

Today's Agenda

- 01 Introduction**
Self introduction
Explanation of theme
- 02 Context**
Reason why we chose this topic
Three contexts
- 03 Experience**
- 04 Comparison**
With internship experience
- 05 Solution & Recommendations**
- 06 Conclusions**

Introduction

Theme: **The impacts of intersectionality on social accessibility**

Social accessibility means the possibility to access their environments: one's workplace, opportunity and education. We give each experience and we hope they will help you to understand.

Why did we choose this topic?

- Looking at intersectionality moves beyond a single perspective
- Different intersections create different stories and life experiences

Context

- Each country has their own issues and perspectives with intersectionality and inequality.
- Three different contexts
 - The home (Asuka - Japan)
 - The school environment (Camille - Australia)
 - The workplace (Soledad - America)

Household Discrimination

My research experience

Survey Question:
Do you believe a woman's happiness lies more in marriage, childbirth, and raising children than in her career?

Results:

Men

Women

Target: 3000 numbers of Japanese high school students

Legend: Agree (pink), Partly Agree (orange), Disagree (green), Partly Disagree (blue), Not sure (grey)

※調査：三城氏対サーベコソサライズ 女子生徒等の福祉系分野への就職選択における地域性についての調査研究調査報告書より作成

My research experience

Survey Question:
Do you believe a woman's happiness lies more in marriage, childbirth, and raising children than in her career?

What this data suggests:

- Even younger generations show influence of traditional gender expectations
- Social norms may shape what young people think women "should" value

— This data reminded me of a moment in my university life

My Personal Experience

One of my friends in my university once said, "I'd like to be housewife after graduation".

I was very surprised because I naturally believed that life should be composed of both career and family.

This experience helped me realize that even among women of the same generation, the expectations they feel—based on their family culture, gender roles, or social environment—can be very different.

Connecting to intersectionality

- Gender, culture and social expectations influence women's life choices
- Some feel encouraged to prioritize family; others feel freer to pursue careers
- These differences show how intersectionality shapes social accessibility



9

Race / Gender Intersectionality

- Race and gender interact and overlap to create a unique, compounded experience of privilege / oppression.
- For example, white women experience ≠ women of colour experience ≠ white man experience



Impacts in a School Environment

Intersectionality of race & gender can influence:

- Peer interactions
- Academic
- Mental health

"Students at the intersection of race and gender often report a lower sense of school connectedness and less caring relationships with school adults compared to white students, which negatively affects academic and social-emotional well-being."

Eccles, J. S. (2004).



High School vs University

- High School → University = Different experiences with intersectionality.
- Influenced by:
 - Puberty
 - Changes in environment
 - Changes in opportunity
- New environment gives opportunity for new interactions and social accessibility
- This doesn't eliminate negative factors of intersectionality



Personal Experience

- I grew up as an Asian female in Australia
- Confusion about my identity at a young age
- Sticking with peers with a similar intersectional identity as me until university
- University environment was more diverse → felt higher degree of social accessibility



Intersectionality & The Workplace

Experience



Listen and repeat



Record yourself



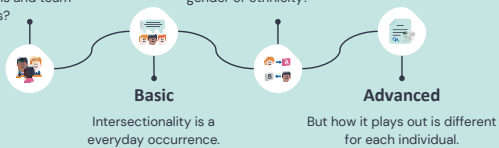
Listen and repeat

14

Academic & Workplace Environments

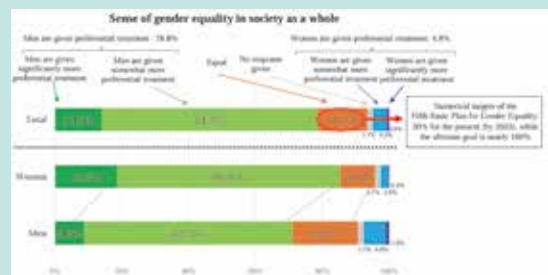
What type of workplaces have you experienced as individuals and team members?

Is teamwork promoted and accessible to all regardless of gender or ethnicity?



15

Gender in Japan



16



Meeting at a Crossroad




17

Solutions

Socialization	Correction/Redirection	Opportunity
Exposure to different cultures and ways of life	Correct harmful behavior and provide support for growth	Have the chance for discussion and action in everyday situations

18

Conclusions

- 
Cultural understanding
 Studying a foreign language can create more positive attitudes and reduce prejudice towards people who are different
- 
Cognitive and social benefits
 It can improve problem-solving or attention span and it also enhances social interaction with diverse groups
- 
Challenges
 We must take into account that some students can find learning a foreign language frustrating

19


Alternative resources

Here's an assortment of alternative resources whose style fits that of this template:

- [Gradient world population day horizontal banner template with planet and people](#)



20



Thank you for listening!

Do you have any questions?

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by [Slidesgo](#) and includes icons by [Elastic](#) and infographics & images by [Freepik](#). Please keep this slide for attribution

References

- 三菱UFJリサーチ&コンサルティング 女子生徒等の理工系分野への進路選択における地域性についての調査研究 調査報告書 (URL:https://www.gender.go.jp/research/kenkyu/pdf/riko_sentaku_research_r03_honpen.pdf) (Viewd on Decemver 3)
- <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277953699001367>
- <https://bera-journals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/berj.3254>
- <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1360080X.2022.2144790>

Reflection Report on My Internship at PADECO: Cross-Cultural Learning, Professional Growth, and Project Management in a Japanese Consulting Firm

N. Batanda (University of East Anglia, U.K.)

Introduction

This report reflects on my two-week internship at **PADECO** a Japanese development consulting firm headquartered in Tokyo. The internship was part of the Global Internship I program, which aims to help students gain cross-cultural professional experience while developing global employability skills. My primary goals were to understand how consultants communicate with clients, to strengthen my professional questioning and presentation skills, and to learn about Japanese workplace culture in comparison with Western business environments.

The internship offered a valuable opportunity to apply theoretical concepts such as project cycle management, intercultural communication, and teamwork in a real-world context. I collaborated closely with a Japanese partner, Haruna Ozaki, and together we conducted interviews, designed professional questions, and developed recommendations that we presented to the company at the end of the placement. Although the internship was short, it was deeply transformative, allowing me to critically reflect on my own adaptability, cultural intelligence, and professional competence.

About PADECO

PADECO, which stands for Pan Development Consultants, was founded in 1983 and has since established itself as one of Japan's leading international development consulting firms. The company operates across sectors such as infrastructure, urban and transportation planning, environmental sustainability, education, and human resource development. Its mission is to contribute to sustainable global development while achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). PADECO's core values include respect for diversity, professional excellence, and the pursuit of new frontiers through innovation.

As a consulting company, PADECO works closely with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). It supports the planning, management, and evaluation of development projects in partner countries, including India, Indonesia,

and various nations in Africa and Latin America. Consultants conduct research, prepare feasibility studies, monitor project implementation, and provide technical expertise to ensure effective outcomes.

During our internship, we examined how PADECO collaborates with JICA and foreign governments, focusing particularly on Japan's partnership with India. Japan plans to invest approximately 10 trillion yen in India over the next decade, focusing on sectors such as clean energy, human resource development, and infrastructure (as noted in our group research). Through this, I gained a clearer understanding of how consultancy firms play a bridging role between public policy and practical development outcomes.

The Internship Project

Our main assignment during the internship was to contribute to FRIENDSHIP 2.0, a collaborative project between IIT Hyderabad (IITH) in India and several Japanese universities. The FRIENDSHIP Project short for *Fostering Resilience, Innovation, and Empowerment through New Dimensions of Student-Industry Partnership* aims to strengthen academic and developmental links between Japan and India. It encourages the exchange of students, researchers, and professionals to promote mutual learning, technological advancement, and cross-cultural understanding. Under this initiative, IITH students have opportunities to study at Japanese universities, gaining experience in Japan's world-class education system, while Japanese students can learn in India's rapidly growing innovation environment.

Within this context, our task as interns was to use a Project Cycle Management (PCM) approach to analyse the FRIENDSHIP initiative and provide practical recommendations for enhancing its reach and effectiveness. Specifically, we were asked to identify how PADECO could help increase awareness of the program among IITH students and how Japanese institutions could make themselves more appealing and accessible to Indian students.

To achieve this, my partner Haruna and I began by conducting interviews with PADECO staff members who were involved in education and international cooperation projects. We also analysed existing materials from PADECO's website, JICA publications, and IITH outreach documents to understand how the partnership was currently being presented. One of our findings was that while the FRIENDSHIP project has a strong academic and cultural foundation, its digital visibility was limited. The PADECO website, for example, had minimal English content related to the program and lacked social media links or alumni testimonials that could inspire future participants.

Using the PCM framework, we identified key project stages situation analysis, design, implementation, and evaluation and applied them to our recommendations. During the analysis stage,

we assessed communication barriers, such as language accessibility and limited online engagement. In the design stage, we proposed strategies such as creating bilingual promotional materials, developing a student ambassador network, and showcasing personal stories from IITH students who had already joined Japanese universities. During the implementation stage, we suggested integrating these elements into PADECO's outreach strategy in coordination with university partners and JICA. Finally, in the evaluation stage, we recommended measurable indicators, such as increased website traffic from India and higher student application numbers.

The process of developing this project management report required strong collaboration, analytical thinking, and cross-cultural communication. It also demanded that we balance Japanese working norms meticulous attention to detail and careful phrasing with more direct Western problem-solving styles. Presenting our findings to PADECO's staff at the end of the internship was both nerve-racking and rewarding. We structured our presentation around the PCM cycle and delivered our recommendations with supporting visuals and data.

Through this project, I learned not only about the FRIENDSHIP program's strategic importance in Japan-India relations but also about how international collaboration projects are designed and evaluated in practice. The assignment deepened my appreciation of how education and consulting intersect to promote sustainable global development. It also helped me develop a more nuanced understanding of how visibility, communication, and cultural empathy can influence the success of international partnerships.

Difficulties encountered

The first and most significant challenge was the language barrier. As I am from the UK and have limited Japanese proficiency, understanding workplace communication and digital tools proved difficult. Many of the internal systems and software interfaces were available only in Japanese, and much of the company's reference material lacked English translations. This made it hard to navigate information quickly, particularly during the early days of the internship.

Secondly, I found it challenging to adapt to the indirect communication style common in Japanese workplaces. In the UK, communication tends to be more direct, with open discussion and debate encouraged. In contrast, Japanese corporate culture values harmony (*wa*), hierarchy, and subtlety. I noticed that staff members were often polite and reserved, and I had to learn to interpret meaning from context rather than explicit statements. At times, I was unsure whether feedback on my work was entirely positive or indicated room for improvement.

Lastly, presenting in a Japanese business context was daunting. The formality, precision, and hierarchy of Japanese presentation styles differ significantly from Western expectations. I initially struggled to adjust my tone and body language to fit the formal setting, especially during our final presentation to company staff.

Strategies to overcome challenges

To overcome these challenges, I adopted several strategies and benefited from valuable advice from mentors and peers.

Regarding the language barrier, I used translation applications and online dictionaries to understand key Japanese terms. Haruna and other Japanese colleagues were incredibly supportive, often explaining meanings or providing English summaries. I also made a conscious effort to learn basic Japanese greetings and workplace expressions, which helped me build rapport and show respect for local culture. This experience reminded me of the importance of linguistic humility and adaptability in global work environments.

In terms of teamwork, Haruna and I decided to divide our tasks clearly while maintaining regular check-ins. This improved our coordination and mutual understanding. We also used English as a neutral working language, which allowed both of us to practice and improve. Collaborating closely with a Japanese student deepened my cross-cultural awareness and taught me how diverse perspectives can strengthen problem-solving.

When preparing for our final presentation, I sought feedback from Haruna and from a PADECO employee with international experience. They advised me to keep my slides minimalist, maintain formal posture, and use polite closing remarks such as “yoroshiku onegaishimasu.” I rehearsed multiple times to ensure my delivery was clear and professional. In particular, Ms. Tsuji-san, who had extensive experience in cross-cultural communication, provided detailed feedback on how to improve both my delivery and presence. She encouraged me to make consistent eye contact with the audience, smile more naturally, and adjust my body language to convey confidence and openness. She also helped us refine our grammar and phrasing to ensure that our English sounded professional and polished for a Japanese business context. Her advice significantly strengthened our overall presentation ability and gave us a deeper understanding of how non-verbal communication contributes to professionalism in Japan. By the end, I felt proud of our presentation it reflected both cultural sensitivity and confident communication.

Self reflection

This internship enhanced my understanding of professional communication, teamwork, and project management in a multicultural environment. Reflecting on my initial goals, I can see measurable progress in several areas.

First, I significantly improved my intercultural communication competence. Before this internship, I had a limited understanding of how cultural values influence workplace behaviour. Through daily interactions at PADECO, I realised that professionalism is not universal—it is culturally defined. I learned to adapt to different expectations around hierarchy, politeness, and time, which will be invaluable for my future career in international business consulting.

Second, I strengthened my analytical and research skills. Conducting interviews required careful preparation, active listening, and note-taking. Applying the project cycle management framework helped me structure my thinking logically and link theory with practice. Producing clear, evidence-based recommendations for PADECO's communication strategy taught me how to approach real organisational challenges systematically.

Third, the experience built my resilience and adaptability. Initially, I was anxious about making mistakes or misunderstanding instructions. However, these difficulties taught me to remain patient, proactive, and self-directed. Instead of viewing uncertainty as failure, I began to see it as an opportunity for learning.

Finally, the internship deepened my self-awareness as a learner and professional. I discovered that I thrive in collaborative environments that value open dialogue, but I also learned the importance of listening, patience, and cultural respect. I developed a more balanced communication style—one that combines Western directness with Japanese consideration and tact.

Future implications

The lessons learned from this internship will have lasting implications for my academic and professional development. In the short term, I intend to continue studying Japanese and improving my cross-cultural competence. Understanding another culture's language and values allows for more authentic collaboration and trust in global settings.

In the long term, this experience has strengthened my interest in international consulting and sustainable development. I now have a clearer sense of how development projects are designed, managed, and evaluated from the consultant's perspective. I also appreciate the delicate balance between efficiency and empathy required in cross-cultural teamwork.

From a broader perspective, my internship has shown me how global companies like PADECO contribute to building connections between nations. By combining technical expertise with cultural sensitivity, such firms help bridge gaps in understanding and promote more inclusive development. This aligns with my own career aspirations to work in an environment that values both analytical rigour and human connection.

Conclusion

Overall, my internship at PADECO was an enriching and transformative experience. It provided me with first-hand exposure to Japan's professional culture, enhanced my communication and analytical skills, and encouraged deep self-reflection about my personal and professional growth.

Working within a cross-cultural team allowed me to appreciate both the challenges and rewards of global collaboration. I learned that effective communication extends beyond language it involves empathy, patience, and openness to difference. While the internship lasted only two weeks, it has left a lasting impression on how I view myself as a learner, a communicator, and a future professional in international business.

In summary, the experience reaffirmed that growth happens at the intersection of challenge and reflection. I entered PADECO as a student eager to learn about consulting; I left as a more self-aware and globally minded individual ready to apply those lessons to my future career.

Supporting Visibility of the FRIENDSHIP Program reflection



Index

1. Our profiles	2. About Padeco
3. Our Padeco experience	4. Prior expectations and work value
5. Our reflections	6. Why universities promote internships?
7. Plans for the future	



About Padeco

PAn DEvelopment COnsultants

A development consulting company in foreign countries established in 1983.



Missions

- Provide customers with professional consulting.
- Achieve SDGs.
- Contribute to global development.

Core Values

1. Developed consultants for the present and future.
2. Respect diversity.
3. Seek new frontiers.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Request from counterpart about upcoming projects based on one's national plan and ODA

JICA HQ

Consultants like PADECO

- Pre-research for planning the project
- Negotiate and communicate with JICA branch office and governmental bodies to finalise the plan of the project
- Cooperate with the consultants to manage and observe the project
- Implement the project cooperating with counterpart and colleague and JICA
- Submit several deliverables to counterpart and JICA to inform their outcomes officially

Our Padeco experience



1. Increase awareness of study and work opportunities in Japan

2. Encourage more Indian students and researchers to go abroad

We interviewed with...

- 9/19 **Banik** (studied in Japan)
- 9/22 **Surigema** (Project Administrator of FRIENDSHIP2.0)
- 9/24 **Wasnik** (studying in Japan)
- 9/24 **Murugappan** (studying in Japan)



The project cycle management



We focused on 3 organisations/Stakeholders & We suggest PADECO advocate for them



Our outcome

Project Plan - IITH	Project Plan - Japanese Universities	Project Plan - Japanese Companies
1. Advertise on Instagram & reels	1. Enhancing supervisors and IITH relationship	1. Make the environment better for everyone
2. Online & offline events	2. Language training courses	2. Sell many kinds of food for foreigners
3. Online student buddy system	3. Creating a community for Indian students	

Why universities should promote internship?

Education beyond the classroom	Connecting theory to practice	Developing reflecting graduates
Dewey (1933) emphasized reflection and action as central to learning. Allows you to learn new skill in a new environment	Internships translates academic theory into real professional context	Blust et al (1981) note reflection as a key to effective learning and employability

Expectations before internship

- To understand more how consultants communicate with clients and their everyday routine
- To improve on my communication skills and presentation abilities
- Learn more Japanese words
- Broaden my knowledge on Japanese work culture and how it is different from western countries
- To understand the social problem deeper.
- To gain the basic skills as a worker.
- To improve my English skills.
- To broaden my viewpoints.

Work value

On The First Day
1. Having a decent income. 2. Being able to be myself in a workplace. 3. Doing work that makes me feel accomplished.
After completing internship
1. Engage in work that gives you a sense of growth. 2. Flexible work environment. 3. Being able to be myself in a workplace.

What I learned

- ★ Improved on my communication skills and presentation abilities
- ★ Broaden my knowledge on Japanese work culture and how it is different from western countries
- ★ Understand more how consultants communicate with clients and their everyday routine

Work value

On The First Day
1. Feel the harmony with your colleagues and workplace. 2. Engage in work that is appreciated by people. 3. Engage in work that requires knowledge and proficiency.
After completing internship
1. The environment is well maintained and fulfilling. 2. Engage in a job to help someone. 3. Engage in work that gives you a sense of growth.

What I learned

- ★ Deepened my view & Got various ways of thinking.
- ★ English is difficult, but amazing!!!

Plans for the future...

- Deepened my interest in nutrition and international policy.
- Apply for graduate roles in nutrition
- Applying for graduate roles in consultancy.
- Going to more industry networking events to learn more
- Expand my skills in data analytics

The Intersection of Global Cultures and Commerce: A Reflection on My Mynavi Internship

J. C. Ezechikamnayo (Saint Mary's College, U.S.A)

Introduction

My two-week intensive internship at Mynavi Corporation in Tokyo, Japan, gave me a singular, deeply insightful dive into one of Japan's most critical and diversified business entities. Mynavi is far more than just a typical corporation; it stands as a multifaceted conglomerate that significantly impacts the professional and lifestyle spheres of Japanese society. At its core, Mynavi is known for its major human resources (HR) and publishing operations. Established in 1973, it has grown to run Japan's leading job-matching platforms for new graduates, mid-career professionals, and part-time workers, making it an indispensable pillar of the nation's employment landscape.

The scope of the company's influence is extensive. Beyond recruitment, Mynavi publishes numerous magazines and books covering IT, professional development, and lifestyle topics. This large reach is further diversified through ventures into real estate, advertising, wedding services, and travel. This complex, integrated system gives Mynavi unparalleled insight into how Japanese consumers and professionals live and work. Geographically, its national footprint is extensive, operating in at least 38 of Japan's 47 prefectures, ensuring its influence is both local and comprehensive. Plus, the corporation commits significant resources to corporate philanthropy, notably focusing on Next Generation Development and Sports & Cultural Support. Interning at a company like this meant I got to study a mastery of business diversification and cultural embeddedness. It was against this backdrop of great local success that I was tasked with contributing to a challenge of global proportions.

The Project: Devising a Global Strategy for US Market Entry

The central theme of my brief but highly focused internship was to develop a Global Business Strategy designed to successfully launch Mynavi into the highly competitive United States market. Specifically, my teammate, Fuka Kawai, and I were asked to devise new ways for Mynavi to enter the new graduate recruitment space in the U.S. This was exciting but also somewhat daunting, constrained by a remarkably short timeframe: two weeks, spanning late August to September 4th.

The compressed schedule meant the learning curve had to be very steep, and the execution had to be flawless. My work was often remote; four days were designated as work-from-home days, which really put the pressure on communication and independent activity. Fuka-san and I collaborated intensely, and we were responsible for providing continuous progress updates to our supervisors, three members of the Global Business Strategy Team, via a shared WhatsApp group chat. This ensured transparency and accountability from the outset. Our mission required us to bridge a fundamental gap: translating Mynavi's success in clarifying the often-daunting Japanese job-hunting process (*shūkatsu*)

into a valuable service for American students navigating the labyrinthine U.S. recruitment landscape. We had to synthesize previous knowledge from past interns with new data gleaned from interviews with U.S. students to develop a viable hypothesis for Mynavi's entry.

My personal discovery during the brainstorming phase of the internship is that Mynavi has a significant advantage of global reach. Mynavi excels at demystifying the job-hunting process by clearly outlining the step-by-step requirements for job seekers. While the US recruitment style often features a myriad of expectations across multiple companies, the core value proposition of Mynavi, providing much-needed clarity, seemed entirely transferable. However, the American system lacks the rigid, centralized hiring cycle common in Japan, which definitely complicated any direct transfer of strategy. This required us to think critically about how Mynavi could provide structure without imposing uniformity. With subsidiaries and satellite locations across the globe, Mynavi possesses a unique asset: the ability to provide global recruitment services to highly qualified job seekers who may be unable to secure a desired position within their home location.

Consider a specialist, such as a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) interested in a professorship. If this client seeks a role in a highly saturated region like the Bay Area in the United States but can't find a vacancy that meets their criteria, Mynavi's global network becomes the solution. While the client might not be interested in a small liberal arts college locally, they might be highly interested in comparable academic opportunities in a major international city like Warsaw. Mynavi, with its global reach and partners, could connect this client to hiring opportunities across continents, transforming geographical constraint into a global opportunity. This concept, leveraging Mynavi's existing global presence to market highly qualified talent across borders, formed a crucial pillar of the strategy we proposed, highlighting a unique competitive edge over domestic U.S. recruitment portals.

Body: Challenges Faced

The most significant initial difficulty I encountered was the confluence of working with a team I did not know, within an extremely limited two-week timeline, all while pursuing a significant strategic goal in a non-English speaking country. The short duration forced us to adopt an extremely agile and focused methodology. Unlike previous internships spanning two months or more, there wasn't any time for a slow start. Every meeting, every interview, and every hour of collaboration had to be maximally productive, necessitating high-speed decision-making and efficient prioritization. The pressure of this condensed timeframe ultimately taught me more about performing under stress than any prolonged internship could have.

Furthermore, I was quite nervous about my limited Japanese speaking skills. It was my first time working in a true non-English primary environment, and I worried about becoming a communication bottleneck. However, this fear was quickly alleviated by the exceptional kindness and proactive flexibility of the Mynavi team. They were genuinely willing to communicate with me, switching

seamlessly to English when needed and patiently utilizing visual aids and simplified language. This interaction transformed what I thought was a weakness into a significant opportunity for intercultural connection.

Overcoming Obstacles with Flexibility and Adaptation

My key strategy for overcoming these challenges was flexibility and radical adaptation. Recognizing how important it was to build rapport quickly and ensure clear alignment with Fuka-san, I was open to trying new methods of working. While some tasks were suitable for remote work, I often traveled to meet Fuka-san in person when collaboration demanded high-bandwidth discussion, such as structuring our final presentation or synthesizing complex data. This willingness to physically navigate the challenging Tokyo environment, despite the initial frustration with traveling, proved invaluable. It not only strengthened my bond with Fuka-san through shared physical effort but also demonstrated a professional commitment to the task at hand. My flexibility and eagerness to adapt to the new, high-intensity environment were the mechanisms that allowed us to ultimately deliver strong results within the stringent deadline.

The Cornerstone of Japanese Professional Communication: Hou-Ren-Sou

One of the most profound and actionable takeaways from the internship was the supervisory team's positive feedback on our communication skills. They specifically praised our adherence to the concept of Hou-Ren-Sou (報・連・相). This Japanese workplace ethos, which translates to Report, Inform, and Consult, became a vital professional lesson for me.

- Hōkoku (報告 - Report): This refers to timely and accurate reporting on the *progress* of a task or project. We consistently reported what we'd achieved, detailing the results of our student interviews and market research. This wasn't merely checking a box; it was providing verifiable data points.
- Renraku (連絡 - Inform): This means sharing necessary *facts or updates* with all relevant parties, regardless of whether you're formally asked. For instance, when Fuka-san and I decided on a major shift in our presentation's structure based on new interview data, we immediately informed the supervisory team via the WhatsApp group before making the change.
- Sōdan (相談 - Consult): This is the crucial element of proactively *seeking advice or consultation* before making a key decision or when encountering a problem. Instead of just presenting a roadblock, we would present a dilemma (e.g., "We found a major difference between the Japanese and US markets regarding hiring timelines; we propose two different ways to handle this, which do you recommend?") and seek input.

The supervisory team was impressed because we kept them consistently in the loop, showing that we took our work seriously and respected their expertise. Hou-Ren-Sou taught me that in a high-stakes,

time-sensitive environment, proactive, structured communication is not just polite; it's an essential risk mitigation tool. It ensures alignment, prevents wasted effort, and builds managerial trust, which is the foundation of effective teamwork.

The Power of Reflective Learning

Looking back on these two weeks, I'm deeply grateful for the whole experience. Reflecting on it through an appreciative lens (taking off those stressful feelings like the initial hassle of travel) helped me really realize the depth of my personal growth. The positive feelings recalled are numerous: the confidence gained in trusting myself to complete a complex task, the satisfaction of following instructions well enough to earn supervisory praise, and the courage required to share my ideas in a foreign business environment, even when I was nervous.

The logistical challenge of commuting (navigating the expansive and often intimidating Tokyo train system) developed an unexpected yet highly valuable skill set: excellent time management and local navigational proficiency. While I was initially frustrated, my successful arrival at work on time every day reinforced a newfound sense of capability. Applying the process of reflective learning to the daily grind of the commute allowed me to develop a profound appreciation for the efficiency and complexity of the Japanese transportation system. This intellectual appreciation, born from practical necessity, has translated into a more well-rounded sense of gratitude for my entire exchange student experience in Japan, solidifying the idea that growth often hides within inconvenience.

Conclusion: Implications for the Future

The Mynavi internship, though short, was a crucible for developing high-level intercultural communication skills within a tangible business context. My primary takeaway is not just the content of the global strategy we devised, but the process of its creation: how to collaborate effectively across language and cultural barriers, how to compress complex tasks into tight timelines, and how to utilize a formal communication structure like Hou-Ren-Sou to ensure success.

These lessons extend far beyond the business field. My ultimate career aspiration is to be a diplomat, and the challenges faced in Tokyo, identifying and bridging the fundamental differences between the Japanese and American recruitment cultures, are directly analogous to the challenges faced in international relations and foreign policy. Devising a market entry strategy requires understanding stakeholders, negotiating value propositions, and aligning divergent expectations, skills that are indispensable for a diplomat. The ability to listen actively, to consult rather than dictate, and to consistently inform all parties are the foundational elements of successful negotiation and relationship-building on the global stage.

In essence, Mynavi taught me that successful globalization is not about forcing one culture's system onto another, but about finding a shared, valuable point of intersection. The internship confirmed my

ability to apply theoretical intercultural knowledge to practical, high-stakes situations, cementing my conviction that my experiences abroad are the most vital tools in my professional toolkit. I left Mynavi with not only a successful strategy presentation but also a heightened sense of self-trust, cross-cultural competence, and readiness for the future challenges of global engagement.

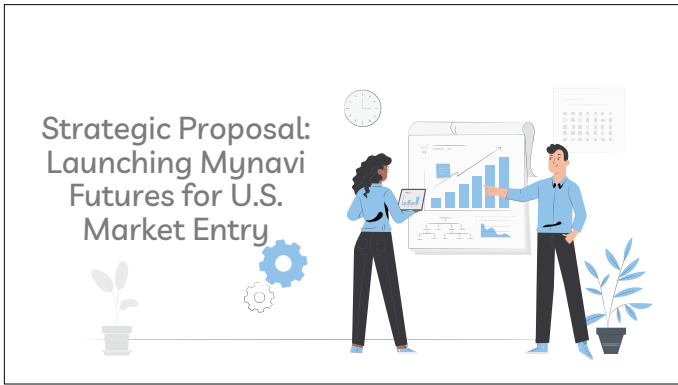
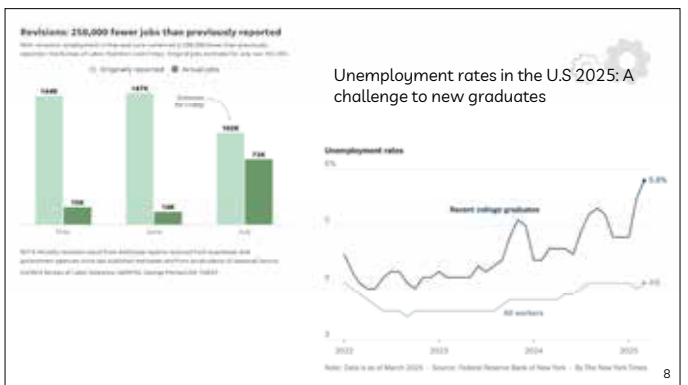
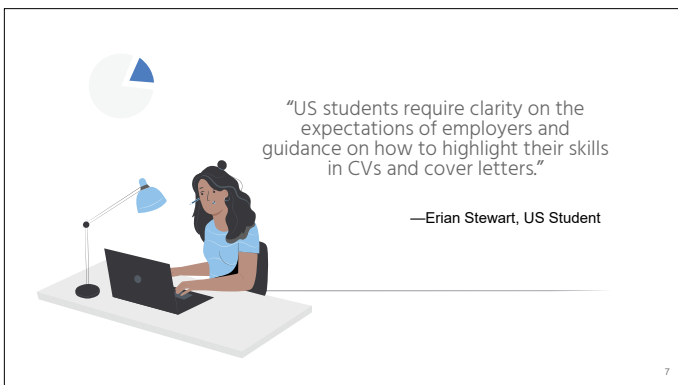
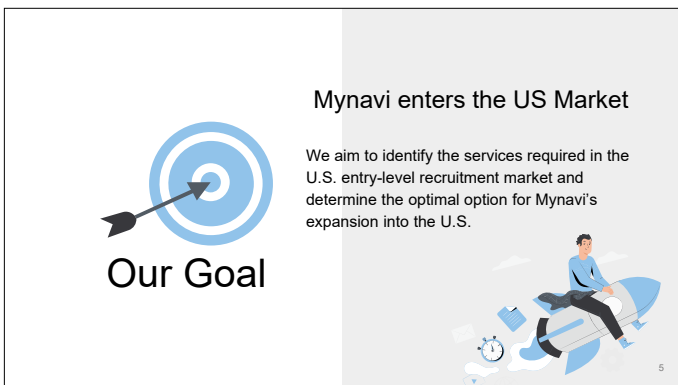
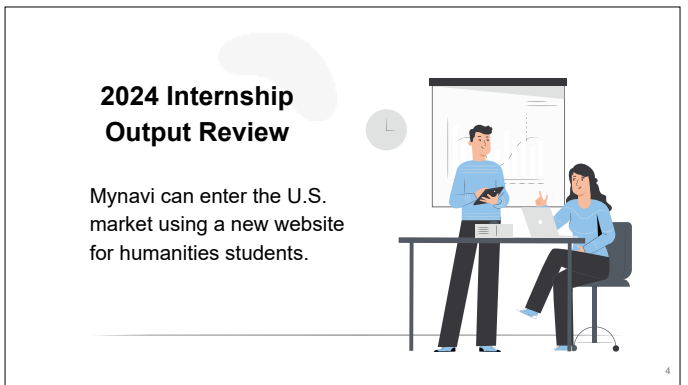
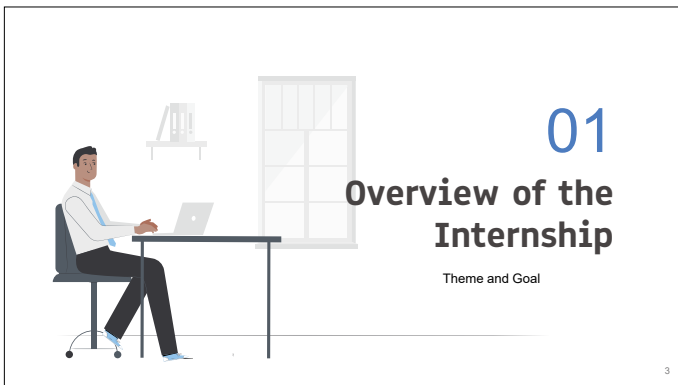
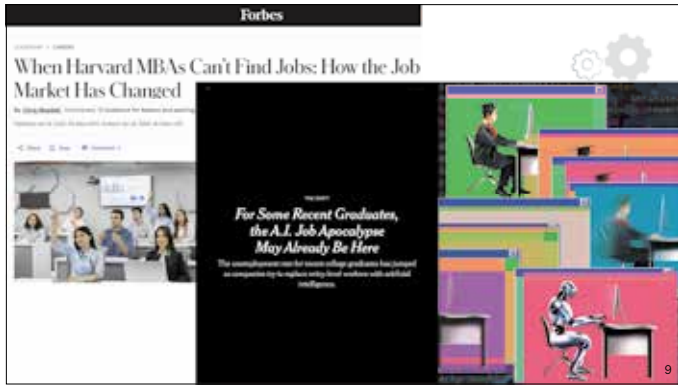


Table of Contents

01 Overview of the Internship	02 Research
03 Interview Report	04 Lessons from the Internship

2





03 Interview Report

10

Interview Report

I need help ascertaining what companies my skills are best suited to.
 – Chancellor Gordon, Class of '26

I was told to download LinkedIn, and Handshake, but nobody taught me how to use it to get jobs. After I connect with people online, how do I maintain such connection, and use it to get employed when I graduate?
 – Erian Stewart, Class of '27

11

04 Lessons from the Internship

12

Identifying the lessons that we learned from Mynavi

Collaboration

We learned to listen to every idea and work together at every point

Hou-Ren-Sou

Ways of communicating with both teammates and supervisors effectively in the workplace

Can-Do Spirit

When faced with a difficult challenge, it is good to approach it believing that we are capable of devising a solution

13

What we learned from the Internship

Working in an unfamiliar space with a target goal and a supportive team delivers the best results

14

Broadening my intercultural perspectives through the ICYE Internship

E. Stewart (Saint Mary's College, U.S.A)

This fall I was fortunate to be able to undergo a short term internship at ICYE Japan.

International Cultural Youth Exchange (ICYE) is a non-profit organization that organizes volunteer social work programs where people all over the world are able to come to Japan to assist the elderly, disabled, and other community service organizations. Currently the organization has programmes offered in 41 countries and in every continent except Australia, so it has a good international reach. When going through the internship, the project we were given was to interview the current group of volunteers and understand their reasons for coming here, any issues they have had so far, their hopes for the future, etc. Then from that information, we could give our ideas to ICYE about how to improve upon the program.

When we started the internship, we attended the orientation alongside the volunteers. We heard their introductions and learned that a majority of them were from European countries with only two being from central america. This was something we took note of in the beginning, but we held off on discussing it until later in the program. We were then given an opportunity to offer some advice to the volunteers about being in Japan. One of the pieces of advice that I gave to them was about not being afraid to make mistakes. As in order to grow, you have to fall down and embarrass yourself sometimes. Another piece of advice I gave was to interact with the community that you're in. A way to get rid of loneliness and feel a part of Japanese society is to interact with the community you live in. Some ways I thought about doing that was attending events hosted by the town you're in, eating at restaurants local to your area, etc. The advice we gave to them seemed to be well received, and we spent the rest of the time building rapport with the volunteers. The next day, we attended Japanese lessons with the volunteers to help them learn helpful Japanese for getting around. Since I am not well versed in Japanese, I also paid attention to the lessons to help improve upon my own understanding of Japanese. After the lessons, me and my internship partner worked on the task assigned to us in the beginning besides our internship project. We had to plan out a day tour for the volunteers to give them a taste of Tokyo prefecture since they would not have a lot of time to explore Tokyo before traveling to their working locations in another prefecture. It was a bit difficult to plan out a tour, since there were a lot of factors to take into account. One, we had to find something that the majority of the volunteers would like. Two, find things that would be good for a large group of people. Then three, fit it all within a good timeframe so that the students who wanted to return back to the ICYE building for dinner could without missing anything. Despite the difficulty, my partner was very good to work with and so in about an hour we were able to create an itinerary. Then we had back up locations in case one of our

plans did not end up working, which came in handy because on the day of the tour one of the sights were closed but we were able to use our back up plan.

The tour went well, and in the following days we would need to start interviewing the volunteers for our project. Me and my partner had to discuss how we wanted to go about interviewing them, and we eventually decided it would be best to create an online questionnaire. The reason we chose that option was because it should be the most efficient option, and we would retain the original thoughts of the volunteers. If we had decided to do the interviews in person we may lose or misunderstand what some of the volunteers were saying. However, once we set up the questionnaire we ran into a problem of doing an online interview. Getting the volunteers to actually do them, the first time we requested them to do the questions, only one person did it. It took us multiple times asking to get the volunteers to do the interview but by the time all the volunteers left, some of them still did not do the interview. I think in the future, I would ask our advisors if they could spare some time during one of the lessons to have the volunteers fill out our question form.

After analyzing the results of the questionnaire we had some valuable results found. For the first one, we had asked the volunteers why they came to Japan and why they chose volunteer work instead of doing a study or getting a job. The most frequent answer we received was that many of the volunteers were interested in Japan's unique culture, and since it was so different from their own they really wanted to experience it. Then for the volunteer question, we found that volunteer work was the most easily accessible option for the volunteers. As it did not require any previous experience and it also made the volunteers feel good for helping out communities who need it. Then the next question we asked them was how they heard of ICYE, and we had gotten a mixed bag of answers. Some say they found the program through research online or advertisements, while others say they spoke with ICYE spokespeople that had come to their school. The last question we had asked them was what were their plans for the future. A lot of the younger volunteers stated that they had hoped that the experience would help them in understanding what they will be doing in the future for college.

So from those results, our advice we gave ICYE was that they should put more resources into advertisements. Seeing that they worked for the volunteers but also it would be good to help increase the diversity of the volunteers. Like we shared earlier, most of the volunteers were from Europe, and though Europe is diverse. If there are only people from Europe coming to Japan, then people in these communities are only getting one taste of diversity. So we think it would be good to increase the diversity of the continents participating in the programmes. Our next piece of advice was that ICYE should increase the type of programmes offered. Currently most of the programs are social work based, and seeing that most of the volunteers were looking to better understand what they may be passionate about we thought it would be good to increase the variety of programs offered.

Overall, the internship went really well. I feel like I learned a lot about what I am capable of and I feel more assured about my capabilities when it comes to working a serious job. There is not much I

would change when it comes to working on the internship besides on how we conducted our interview. Following the solutions I had set up earlier I hope that in the future, other students doing this internship will make sure that all the volunteers fill out the questionnaire.

Broadening our intercultural knowledge

ICYE Internship

Introduction

This fall we were fortunate to be able to undertake an internship with the nonprofit organization ICYE. Where we helped assist our supervisors with making sure that the volunteers were taken care of.

ICYE

Which stands for International Cultural Youth Exchange. Is a nonprofit organization that gives people the opportunity to broaden their intercultural understanding and break down barriers through the use of volunteer work.

- ## Study objectives
- Cultural**
We took the volunteers on a tour around Tokyo to expose them to the culture.
 - Daily life**
We taught them foundational knowledge that is helpful for living here.
 - Future purposes**
We conducted a small survey to understand their motivations and thoughts.

Daily life

Advice

At the start of the program, we gave volunteers advice on how to handle being abroad.

Everyday

We took the volunteers around Tokyo and taught them about trains. Along with finding places to eat.

Japanese

We helped them practice survival Japanese and introduce Japanese culture.

Survey

We created a survey for the volunteers to complete. The questions aimed in a way to give us insight over what incoming volunteers may need or expect when coming to Japan, and how we can improve future experiences.



Why did they choose Japan?

The combination of modern and old tradition at the same time is something that fascinates me about Japan. To me the Japanese culture is extremely interesting and something worth exploring. It's just something very different to Germany and I want to experience these differences and maybe even find similarities.

I've always been interested in the Japanese culture and the fact that there was a programme in kindergarten, where I've worked in Italy, deepened my decision to come to this country.

Interesting culture while also not being too unfamiliar. It's also very far away from home and seeing the world outside of the small area I lived in has been one of my dreams since childhood.

I've been learning the language for two years, and I'm really interested in the culture (both movies/books and everyday life).

Language Because of the culture and Old History

What are some of their projects?

I'm working at a mountain resort that provides a rehabilitation program for people of various ages struggling with work/school. I'll be interacting with the "students" there and with the project staff. I'll be assisting the students and helping with cleaning and other practical tasks.

I will be in an international kindergarten that takes 0 to 3 year olds. If my tasks are the same as the tasks the girl in my project before me had, I will be looking after the 0-3 year olds (holiker) and will give English lessons to the 2-3 year olds once a week.

The project will be in Kajiwaki Kindergarten in Hasegawa. I'll interact with children and I'll support the teachers in their activities.

I'll be teaching kids english and doing afternoon clubs

Why volunteer work?

I wanted to have the support of the organisation. I also didn't want to have to look for a job and stuff. As for studying, I've heard that the schools in Japan are strict especially high schools so I didn't want to go there lol.

I think there's more exciting opportunities on the table when doing volunteer work because you're not expected to have the amount of experience required for a normal job. Also, since I'm currently a high-school graduate, it was one of the more straightforward ways of doing an exchange.

I think volunteering helps you to grow as a person. I wanted to contribute to something meaningful and give back to the community. While paid work is important, volunteering gives me the chance to develop empathy, independence and teamwork skills while making a positive impact.

The benefits and types of work provided by ICYE seemed to be more interesting. And ICYE being advertised to me by my teachers during my last year of high school already got me interested and ready for this before I even graduated and had time to look for other routes to do international work.

How did they discover ICYE?



- * Family & Teachers
- * Advertisements
- * Searching online
- * Came to my Uni

Goals and expectations for their projects

I want to be able to improve my Japanese and experience the daily life in Japan. I expect that I'll have to do a good amount of work, and I think it will be challenging at times, but I'm ready for that challenge and will try to do my best to do what's expected of me.

I hope that my project helps me to learn more about the Japanese language and culture. I also strive to teach the children and the employees something about German (and European) culture.

Be a help and learn from them

I really hope I'll be able to achieve a better understanding of the Japanese language and culture. I want to experience the differences and maybe the similarities between the Italian and the Japanese school system. I also hope this experience will help me understand myself better.

What are their goals for future?

I want to start university, and I hope that my exchange here in Japan can give me more "practical experience" before I return to a more theoretical approach at university.

I hope to be able to bring to my work what I'll learn here and it'll be nice to continue discovering different school systems in the world.

I hope that during my year in Japan, I will figure out what I want to study when returning to Germany. I don't really know yet what I want to study, but I just hope that I will find something that I will enjoy doing.

Be able to understand Japanese

Ideas

Increase ads & it's spread

ICYE should increase the amount of ads that they do. Along with putting more resources into information to different continents.

Vary programmes

Some volunteers expect to find what they really want to do in the future through the experiences. Various choices would be helpful for them.

Global Internship at IIBC

S. Ikeda (Ochanomizu University, JAPAN)

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present a detailed overview of my internship at The Institute for International Business Communication (IIBC). This internship was conducted as part of the EDI Program and Global Internship I at Ochanomizu University, and it included basic lectures about workplace manners in Japanese society, actual work experience at IIBC's office, several lectures on EDI-related issues, and both face-to-face and online meetings.

The internship lasted for a total of 60 hours, with approximately 9 to 10 hours of work each day. I worked in the Marketing Department, particularly in the promotion section, together with an international student as my partner. The main goal of our internship was to propose effective ways to encourage Japanese university students to take the TOEIC Speaking Test. To achieve this goal, we conducted research, held meetings, and, at the end of the internship, gave a presentation summarizing our findings and proposals.

This report consists of several parts. First, it provides an overview of the company and its business field. Next, it explains the project I was involved in and the specific tasks I performed. The following sections discuss the challenges I faced during the internship and the strategies I used to overcome them. Finally, the report concludes with reflections on how this internship has influenced my personal and professional development.

2. Company Overview and Business Field

IIBC is a Japanese organization that aims to promote smooth communication within the global community and to contribute to the advancement of internationalization for both people and businesses. The organization works closely with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) in the United States to administer and develop the TOEIC tests in Japan. IIBC was founded in 1986, and its head office is located in Nakano, Tokyo.

There are three main business that IIBC conducts. IIBC's main business field is English language assessment and communication training. It manages various TOEIC tests, including the TOEIC Listening & Reading Test, the TOEIC Speaking & Writing Tests, and the TOEIC Bridge Test for beginners. In addition to test administration, IIBC produces a wide range of publications, such as research reports, learning materials, and informational booklets, to support English education and professional development. It also organizes seminars and training programs for educators, students, and business professionals who wish to improve their English communication skills. The TOEIC Listening & Reading test is one of the most recognized measures for students and companies, and

many companies use TOEIC scores as part of their hiring and promotion criteria. Therefore, IIBC plays a key role in connecting English education and career opportunities.

In addition to its contributions to language education, IIBC is known for its progressive approach to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). The organization actively promotes gender equality, work-life balance, and respect for diversity in the workplace. For instance, it encourages parental leave for both male and female employees and fosters an inclusive environment where individuals from various backgrounds can work comfortably. These efforts reflect IIBC's strong commitment not only to fostering communication across cultures but also to creating an equitable and supportive workplace.

During my internship, I and my partner worked in the Marketing Department, particularly in the promotion section. Promotion section mainly focuses on promoting the TOEIC test for students and company. Also, it works to increase public awareness of the importance of English-speaking skills in global business using a lot of advertisement.

3. Internship Project and Responsibilities

In the Marketing Department, my partner and I worked on a project designed to encourage Japanese university students to take the TOEIC Speaking Test. The project required us to plan a promotional program from scratch, conduct research, and create materials to support our proposal.

When deciding how to design our program, my partner and I had several discussions about what kind of approach would be most effective for our target audience: Japanese university students. Instead of simply encouraging them to take the TOEIC Speaking Test, we wanted to create an opportunity for them to become more interested in learning English itself. We believed that by helping students understand the broader value of English skills in their education and future careers, they would naturally become more motivated to improve their proficiency.

In our discussions, we focused on how English ability is closely connected to various education- and career-based opportunities, such as study abroad programs, domestic and international business, and social and economic development. We also emphasized that taking the TOEIC Speaking Test can serve as a useful way to assess one's current level of English and identify areas for improvement. Based on these ideas, we decided to organize a seminar that would inspire students to see English learning not as an obligation, but as a meaningful step toward personal and professional growth.

To understand our target audience better, I created a background questionnaire for students in my department at Ochanomizu University. The purpose of this survey was to explore Japanese university students' real attitudes toward learning English and to help us design appropriate seminar content. According to the results, many students recognized the importance of English for their future but struggled to stay motivated in their studies. Therefore, we decided to focus our seminar on learning motivation and the practical benefits of English skills for Japanese students' future careers.

Around the same time, we attended a lecture on research methods and decided to design a post-seminar questionnaire to measure participants' reactions and learning outcomes. After finalizing the key points of our seminar, we arranged meetings with two guest speakers: Professor Hirano and Mr. Okawa. These meetings helped us make the seminar content more specific and practical. The seminar itself consisted of two sessions led by professional guest speakers. In the first session, Professor Hirano, an expert in English education, gave a talk on how to maintain long-term motivation in learning English. She introduced several practical methods for building consistent study habits and overcoming periods of low motivation, which were especially useful for university students who often struggle to stay engaged in language learning. In the second session, Mr. Okawa, a professional with extensive experience in studying and working abroad, shared his insights from various international programs and internships. He talked about how his English skills had enabled him to communicate effectively in global environments and expand his career opportunities. Both speakers provided realistic and inspiring perspectives that helped participants understand how English learning connects to their future goals and personal growth. Finally, we decided on the detailed aspects of the event, such as the date, venue, and time schedule, and created both a flyer and a web page to promote the seminar.

4. Challenges and Solutions

There were three main difficulties I faced during the internship.

The first was the difference between my partner and me in how to promote the program. When I usually work on research tasks, I tend to follow a process: formulating a hypothesis, conducting research, and then using the results to draw a conclusion. However, in this internship, the final proposal was decided at the beginning of our discussions, and it seemed as if the results of my questionnaire research were already assumed to be ideal. I was confused by this unexpected approach and sometimes found it difficult to understand what I was supposed to do. It was a challenging situation for me, but I tried to ask my partner questions about our current progress and organize my tasks more clearly. Although I felt embarrassed about not being able to keep up, I learned the importance of asking questions openly. My supervisor also helped me understand the situation and provided effective advice and necessary data.

The second difficulty was communication in English. Since I spent most of my time working only with my partner, I had to communicate in English. Because our discussions went far beyond daily conversation, I often found it difficult to understand what my partner wanted to say. I also had trouble expressing what I wanted to do or what I thought. When my English was misunderstood, I sometimes did not know how to correct it, and I was once told that I was too quiet. When I asked my supervisor for advice, he said that language barriers are to be expected in such internships and emphasized that it is important to keep trying to communicate, even if my English is not perfect. His words gave me confidence and helped me stop overthinking my language skills. After that, we started using translation

tools whenever we had trouble communicating. This allowed us to avoid misunderstandings and find effective ways to exchange ideas.

The third difficulty was the frustration of relying too much on Japanese. My marketing team members spoke both Japanese and English, and when I communicated with them, I often used Japanese. When I applied for the EDI program, my goal was to improve my English skills and change my conservative side, but during the internship, I didn't quite achieve my goal of using English boldly and frequently. Therefore, I felt frustrated and irritated with myself for not being able to do it. Because of that, I sometimes felt frustrated and disappointed in myself. I did not share this concern with anyone during the internship, but through reflection, I realized the importance of setting realistic goals and continuing to challenge myself to use English actively in future opportunities.

5. Implications for Future

Through the internship at IIBC, I was able to improve my mindset and attitude toward learning English and expand future options. I also developed my problem-solving skills through planning the mock seminar. Although I faced many difficulties, my partner and I successfully proposed detailed seminar content and received positive evaluations from the marketing members. Through this experience, I learned how to identify what is necessary for a project and how to cooperate effectively with others. This process was also deeply connected to the development of my attitude toward learning English. Before joining the internship program, I thought English was something very difficult and that I had to use it perfectly. However, now I believe that communication is more important than perfection. I learned that making mistakes is not a bad thing but rather a natural part of learning. From this internship experience, I realized that the most important thing for me is to continue learning English with confidence and a more relaxed attitude. In fact, I have learned from actual experience that even when I cannot express everything perfectly in English, my message can still be conveyed—and sometimes even more effectively. At the same time, I believe that carefully understanding others' intentions and nuances, and facilitating smooth communication, greatly enhances teamwork and collaboration. To cultivate the communication skills essential for working in international fields in the future, I will continue to challenge myself and keep learning.

Furthermore, through this internship, I developed a desire to challenge myself in new job fields. While I had never tried marketing before, this experience allowed me to understand its importance and the joy of planning. By broadening my future career possibilities, I believe I can diversify my learning going forward.

6. Conclusion

Through the internship at IIBC, I gained valuable personal insights about myself. I improved not only my communication and problem-solving skills but also my self-awareness. By facing various

challenges and overcoming them, I was able to change my mindset and develop a more positive attitude toward achieving goals.

I am deeply grateful to my supervisors and all the IIBC members who supported and guided me throughout this internship. Their advice and encouragement helped me grow both personally and professionally.

In the future, I would like to work in an international field, and I hope to make use of what I learned through this valuable experience. As I prepare to study abroad next year, I will continue to learn actively, strengthen my confidence, and keep challenging myself to grow as a more open-minded and capable person.



Unlock the Future, Connect the World
From Internship to Seminar

Introduction

- Internship Process
- Project Overview
- Proposal Plan
- Seminar Details



About the internship

- Part of EDI program in Ochanomizu university
- 60 hours internship
- Global Education Opportunity
- Centralized International Business

Project Overview

TOEIC Speaking test to University students

- The purpose : To have University Students take TOEIC Speaking Test
- This seminar is the first step
We want them to get interested in English

Why we chose to plan a seminar/ why this seminar topic

- Students struggle with Speaking(Questionnaire)
- Seminar is a good way to motivate in short amount of time

Seminar Detail

“Unlock the Future. Connect the World”

- Inviting students to excel in navigating their English-speaking journey -

- Date: Oct 28(Tue), 2025 16:30-18:00
- Venue: Ochanomizu University & Online
- Target: University students

Seminar Contents

- Opening Remarks
- Two Guest Speakers
- Introduction from IIBC (About speaking test)
- Q and A

Guest Speakers

「3000名以上を育成したキャリアのプロが伝授！学生時代から始める英語と未来づくり」

→ English and Career development

An opportunity to think about future career

「英語学習の壁を超える！モチベーションを高める学び方」

→ How to keep motivation for learning English

*toeic.

Personal Reflection

- Overall: Really fun and inspiring !!
Learned a lot of new things
- Challenges:
 - Limited marketing knowledge
 - Communication in English



ETS, PROPELL, TOEIC and TOEIC BRIDGE are registered trademarks of ETS, Princeton, New Jersey, USA, and used in Japan under license. The EarthPoint logo is a trademark of ETS. Photos are copyrighted by ETS and used with permission.

9

*toeic.

Personal Reflection

- Future goals
- Communication skills
- Confidence
- Keep learning



ETS, PROPELL, TOEIC and TOEIC BRIDGE are registered trademarks of ETS, Princeton, New Jersey, USA, and used in Japan under license. The EarthPoint logo is a trademark of ETS. Photos are copyrighted by ETS and used with permission.

10

Final internship essay - British Council

J. Bian (University of Technology Sydney, AUSTRALIA)

Introduction

During my exchange programme in Tokyo, I took part in a short-term internship at the British Council Japan, which was one of the most rewarding academic and personal experiences I have had to date. Moving to a Japanese office setting, particularly in an international organisation like the British Council, revealed a complex blend of professional norms, cultural expectations, and communication styles. I come from Sydney, where workplace culture is typically informal, direct, and multicultural. In the end, this experience increased my confidence in navigating culturally diverse professional settings and broadened my perspective on the world. This reflection will discuss the British Council as an organisation, outline the major tasks and projects I was assigned, identify key challenges I encountered, describe how I overcame these difficulties, and examine the broader implications for my future academic and career journey. The aim is not only to summarise the work undertaken but also to evaluate my personal and professional growth during the internship period.

Overview of the British Council

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. Operating in more than 100 countries, it promotes global cooperation through English language education, academic exchange, cultural programs, and support for international mobility. The Japan office plays a significant role in strengthening UK–Japan relations by facilitating educational programs, organising cultural events, supporting scholarship initiatives, and promoting international collaboration within academic institutions and workplaces.

Although the British Council is a global organisation guided by British values, its Japan office naturally incorporates Japanese workplace norms. This hybrid work environment made my internship particularly fascinating, as it allowed me to observe how global organisations adapt to local culture while maintaining their international identity. My internship lasted several weeks, during which I worked closely with my internship partner, Haruka-san, and our supervisor, who was fluent in both English and Japanese. This bilingual environment supported both my learning and my adjustment to a Japanese workplace.

Main Internship Project: Gender Equality Research

My primary task during the internship was a substantial research project titled “Gender Equality in Higher Education and Workplaces in Japan: Insights for the British Council.” Unlike my smaller daily tasks, this project required ongoing commitment, independent research, and synthesis of a wide range of sources, including MEXT reports on Japanese higher education, OECD data on gender participation and wage disparities, Government statistics from the Gender Equality Bureau, International comparisons of leadership representation and Studies examining diversity and innovation.

This study forced me to investigate intricate social issues that I had previously only skimmed the surface of. I was unaware of how different the situation was in Japan because I grew up in Australia, where discussions about gender equality are frequent, and women are increasingly represented in leadership positions. Analysing current data showed enduring disparities in wage parity, managerial roles, and academic leadership in Japan really opened my eyes to the large gender gap regarding wages, women in higher leadership positions and the rate of women and men in the workforce. The cultural elements that contributed to these differences, such as structural workplace barriers and conventional gender expectations, were equally significant.

This project improved my academic writing, sharpened my analytical skills, and made me consider and ultimately integrate Japanese workplace norms. It inspired me to see gender equality as a problem profoundly influenced by regional history, social norms, and legislative frameworks rather than as a universal idea with a single solution.

Supporting Tasks

Alongside my major research assignment, I completed several smaller tasks that helped the British Council prepare for upcoming events and maintain internal organisation. Although these were simpler than the research project, they were essential for understanding day-to-day operations in an international office.

One of my first responsibilities was to help with a thorough inventory count of office supplies. This included brochures, event merchandise, educational resources, and various promotional items. Even though this task seems simple, it taught me the value of accuracy, consistency, and teamwork, especially in a Japanese setting where accuracy and attention to detail are highly prized. Making a thorough time-stamped sheet detailing which employees were in charge of particular duties during an impending British Council event was another important duty. This called for meticulous preparation, precise formatting, and a solid grasp of event logistics. This task taught me how much planning goes into a cultural or educational event and how crucial coordination is to its successful execution.

Additionally, I researched UK-Japan scholarship programmes, looking at previous exchange projects, funding opportunities, and partnerships. This made it possible for me to comprehend the British Council's larger role in advancing academic mobility and international study pathways. Additionally, it made it easier for me to relate my personal exchange experience to more extensive structural frameworks that promote international education. These smaller assignments enhanced my larger project by helping me understand the administrative aspects of global organisations and the value of dependable teamwork.

Cultural Differences Between Australian and Japanese Workplaces

One of the most transformative aspects of this internship was experiencing how differently Australia and Japan approach workplace communication, hierarchy, expectations, and collaboration.

Workplaces in Sydney are typically informal, welcoming, and uncomplicated. People ask questions, speak honestly, and directly express their opinions. However, the atmosphere was much more formal in Japan, where indirect communication, subtlety, and politeness are valued. The British Council is an international organisation, but everyday interactions are still influenced by Japanese culture. Extremely formal greetings, more indirect language to avoid coming across as confrontational, careful thought before providing feedback, and a focus on listening rather than speaking first are just a few of the differences I observed. I was occasionally concerned that I might come across as too straightforward or informal, but I eventually adjusted by paying close attention to my coworkers and changing the way I communicated. This helped me become more culturally sensitive and more aware of how my communication might be perceived in different contexts.

In the Japanese workplace, accuracy, thoroughness, and teamwork are highly valued. Australian workplaces, on the other hand, frequently place an emphasis on productivity, adaptability, and individual initiative. When completing tasks like event planning and documentation, this difference became evident. Even seemingly insignificant details like formatting, spacing, and structure are crucial and should not be disregarded. This degree of accuracy was intimidating at first, but in the end, it strengthened my professional habits and sharpened my attention to detail. Additionally, I started to value the Japanese approach to planning, which places more emphasis on avoiding errors before they occur than correcting them afterwards.

The Japanese idea of workplace harmony was another aspect of culture that caught my attention. Maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships is regarded as crucial in professional settings in Japan. People prioritise being courteous, work quietly, and ignore their frustrations. This is not the case in Australian workplaces, where sharing viewpoints and having frank conversations are encouraged. Seeing this difference made me think about how important it is to be adaptable in

multicultural settings and how important it is to strike a balance between harmony and candid communication.

Challenges Encountered During the Internship

One of the biggest challenges I faced was working with my internship partner, Haruka-san, who had somewhat limited English proficiency. Since I do not speak Japanese, we struggled to communicate effectively at first. Simple tasks sometimes took longer than expected because we had to rely on translation applications, hand gestures, visual demonstrations and dividing tasks to minimise language barriers. Despite this challenge, we gradually developed our own communication rhythm. Working with her taught me patience, empathy, and the importance of non-verbal communication. It also helped me better understand what it feels like for non-native English speakers to work in international environments, a lesson that I will carry with me in my future HR and multicultural workplace roles.

Learning the unwritten rules of Japanese professional culture, such as those about hierarchy, etiquette, and subtle forms of communication, presented another difficulty. But my bilingual boss was really helpful. She made sure Haruka and I understood our responsibilities, gave advice, and made expectations clear. Her guidance eased the transition and increased our self-assurance. I learned to speak more slowly, use simpler vocabulary, and use shorter sentences to convey ideas in order to overcome our communication difficulties. As a result, there were fewer misunderstandings, and it was easier for Haruka to understand me. We also relied heavily on visual organisation, colour-coded spreadsheets, charts, shared Google Docs, and diagrams. This approach helped us bridge language gaps and created a collaborative workflow.

Personal Growth and Future Implications

This internship had a profound impact on me, both professionally and personally. As someone pursuing a future career in international HR and management, I gained invaluable skills that will undoubtedly shape my career. My ability to communicate across cultural boundaries has improved as a result of this internship. Working across cultural and linguistic divides made me more understanding, patient, and adaptive. I now have more self-assurance when working with multicultural teams. My work habits were influenced by Japanese precision, which made me more meticulous and cautious in how I approached tasks. My interest in positions involving cross-border collaboration, international education, HR and diversity management, and cultural exchange was bolstered by my time at the British Council. I was able to think about resilience, independence, and the capacity to adjust to new situations while living and working in Japan. As a young adult living overseas, these lessons have helped me grow personally and go well beyond the workplace.

Conclusion

My brief internship at the British Council Japan was much more than a professional placement; it was a life-changing experience that shattered my preconceptions, broadened my perspective, and reinforced my professional goals. I gained useful skills and cultural awareness from my major gender-equality research project, daily administrative duties, and working with coworkers from diverse cultural backgrounds. These will be extremely helpful in my future career.

The difficulties I faced, particularly with communication and cultural adjustment, turned into learning opportunities that helped me develop as a student and as a budding international professional. In the end, this internship expanded my knowledge of how multinational corporations function, how cultural differences influence behaviour at work, and how cross-cultural cooperation can benefit both people and organisations. One of the most significant experiences of my exchange programme will always be my stay at the British Council Japan, which had a long-lasting effect on my professional and personal growth.



Internship at the British Council

Gender Equality in Higher Education & Workplaces in Japan

Objectives

- Research for new project on promoting gender equality in higher education in Japan

Tasks

- 1: Education team asset inventory
- 2: Event operational planning
- 3: Research on scholarship programmes available for Japanese students studying with UK higher education institutions
- 4: Research on Japanese alumni of UK higher education institutions, including exchange programmes

1. Inventory Management

Check quantity of each item
↓
Organize the data by creating an Asset Inventory Sheet in Excel

★ **user-friendly**
→ so that anyone can understand it without additional explanation

e.g.) functions to automatically display "Need" when the Quantity in Stock fell below the Reorder Point

2. Event operation

- Created a detailed timetable and task allocation plan for an upcoming event
- Outlined key roles, timings, and responsibilities for each segment
- Ensured smooth coordination between speakers, staff, and partners
- Focused on efficiency, punctuality, and audience flow
- Supported the British Council as event host to maintain professionalism and engagement

3. Research on scholarship programmes

Compare two British Council scholarship websites in order to check whether they contained the same information
↓
Organize the information, add the new information and developed an idea for new website

4. Research on Japanese alumni of UK higher education institution

Check official websites of the universities and gathered detailed information
↓
Organize all the findings into an Excel table

Placement Project

★ **Research for new project on promoting gender equality in higher education in Japan**

We approached it from two perspectives:

Structural approach

Conscious approach

Promoting Gender Equality in Higher Education in Japan



In Japan, higher education has made progress in enrolling more women, but significant gender disparities remain, particularly in elite institutions and academic leadership.

- Japan ranks 125th out of 146 in Global Gender Gap Index (WEF, 2023)
- Underrepresentation in universities and companies → limits innovation & diversity
- Opportunity for British Council to promote equality through education & partnerships

Gender Inequality in Japanese Universities

- Women ~45% of undergraduates, but only 30% of postgraduates (OECD, 2023)
- University of Tokyo: only 21.6% female undergraduates
- Female faculty: 17.5% overall, <10% professors, <5% university presidents (MEXT, 2022)

Gender Inequality in Japanese Companies

Despite women making up a large share of Japan's university graduates, they remain underrepresented in senior positions across most industries. This gap reflects persistent barriers such as long working hours, limited access to flexible work arrangements, and social expectations that prioritize men's careers.

- Women on boards: 12.9% (Tokyo Stock Exchange, 2023)
- Women in management: 15.5% (OECD avg: 33.7%)
- Gender wage gap: 22.5% (OECD, 2022)
- Barriers: long working hours, seniority-based promotion, caregiving expectations

How Japan Collects Gender Data

Universities:

- MEXT surveys (enrollment, graduation, faculty by gender)
- Universities publish gender action plans

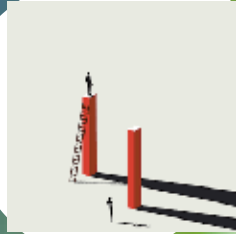
Companies:

- 2016 Women's Advancement Act → companies (300+ employees) must disclose gender data
- Public database of women's advancement in companies



Is the System Effective?

- Japan has introduced several frameworks to address gender inequality, such as the Act on Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace (2016) which requires companies to set gender-related goals and publish progress
- **Strengths:**
 - Standardised, mandatory reporting
 - Public databases improve transparency
- **Weaknesses:**
 - Limited enforcement
 - Smaller companies exempt
 - Culture & norms still major barriers



Barriers & Solutions

Barriers:

- Deep-rooted gender norms
- Long working hours & rigid hierarchies
- Resistance to external influence

Solutions:

- Align with Japanese gender equality plans (政府's Basic Plan)
- Frame within values of harmony and collective benefit
- Ensure local ownership & partnerships



Benefits of Diverse Research Teams

- Diversity within academic and corporate teams is increasingly recognized as a driver of innovation, productivity, and long-term success.
- In both research and business settings, teams with varied perspectives are better equipped to generate creative solutions and challenge conventional thinking.
- Gender-diverse teams cited 34% more often (Nature, 2019)
- McKinsey (2020): companies with more women in exec teams → 25% higher profitability
- Greater creativity, innovation, and global competitiveness



Recommendations for British Council Japan

- **University Partnerships:** mentorship, scholarships, leadership training for women
- **Corporate Programs:** unconscious bias training, diversity benchmarks
- **Visibility:** highlight female role models in academia & culture
- **Exchanges:** UK-Japan research collaboration requiring diverse teams



Invisible walls in Japan

- There is still a **significant gender gap** in higher education in Japan
- Behind this gap lies an **"invisible wall"** made up of unconscious biases, cultural expectations, and structural barriers
- These walls **limited the career choices** of female researchers. And hinder the fair distribution

Making the Invisible Visible

[Research is a man's field]

Undervaluation and barriers to entry for women in STEM and research fields

[Women should prioritize family]

Social pressure that hinders the balance between career and family

[Leadership is a male trait]

The impact of stereotypes on the promotion of women to managerial positions

Since these stereotypes are shared across society, the first step is to make them visible and raise awareness about them

The Role of Men

96%

Active participation of men

Progress in male-engaged organizations

30%

Lack of male participation

Progress in male-excluded organization

If only women are involved, gender equality tends to be seen as a "women's issue".

However, when men participate as partners, genuine cultural transformation becomes possible.

Evidence Based Effective Approach

1

2013 : 11% of professors were women

2

Implemented measures: unconscious bias training, strengthened mentoring, and improved support systems

3

2019: 19% of professors were women

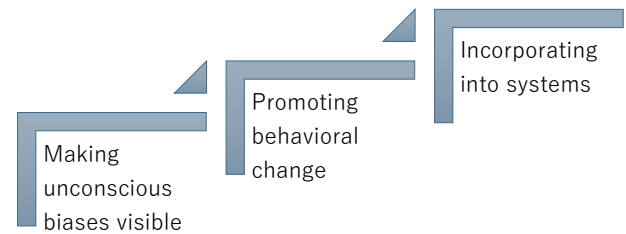
Sustainable progress has been achieved by combining not only awareness-raising but also systemic reforms and changes in culture and behavior

Factors for Success

1	2	3
Frame men as partners, not opponents	Move from awareness to behavior	Create systems that benefit everyone
Build a collaborative framework	Translate into practical actions	A system that benefit not only women but also the entire organization

These elements also align with Japanese cultural values, such as harmony and collective benefit

Action Plan



Advance through an inclusive approach



Changing mindsets

Making biases visible and raise awareness



Collaborative Action

Men and women participating together as partners



Sustainable Mechanisms

Transform both systems and culture based on data and transparency

Global Internship I

T. Le (University of Technology Sydney, AUSTRALIA)

I went into my two-week internship at Shikigaku not really knowing what to expect. To be completely honest, I was just hoping that working in Japan wouldn't be as tiring or overworking as people often describe it. I had heard so many stories about strict office culture, long hours, and pressure to be perfect, so I felt a mix of excitement and nervousness when I started. Surprisingly, I ended up having a really positive experience, especially thanks to my partner Hinako, who supported me the whole time. This was my first time working in Japan and my first time in a Japanese company environment, let alone inside a management consulting firm. As a marketing student, I knew this experience would be different from anything I had done before, and that made it even more valuable to me.

Even though the internship lasted only two weeks, I still walked away feeling like I had learned a lot about marketing, consulting and even about myself. This report reflects on my time spent at Shikigaku by describing the company, the project Hinako and I worked on, the challenges I faced, how I overcame them and what I learned from the overall experience. This reflection is also to help me connect what I've learned at university with what actually happens in a workplace, especially a workplace connected closely to my major.

Firstly, what is Shikigaku? Shikigaku is a Japanese management consulting company known for its unique organisational theory. Before the internship, I honestly didn't know much about the consulting industry at all and especially since this is one in Japan, but I quickly learned why over 2000 companies rely on them. Their main service is a one on one training program aimed at business owners and managers. Clients go through 12 sessions over 3 months, and these sessions teach them practical management skills they can immediately apply to their teams. These lessons are paired with weekly consulting, so clients get personal guidance on using the concepts in real situations. Over two thousand companies in Japan have used the Shikigaku method to improve communication and allow for more clarity between team roles and increase workplace efficiency.

This company is well known among business owners and managers, with most of their clients being between 35 and 50 years old. This is understandable for a consulting company, but it also meant that they were not reaching any younger audiences. That is where our project came in and since they wanted to expand their reach, they asked us to explore how their services might appeal to a

demographic they had never targeted before. This gave us a lot of freedom and also made our work feel meaningful because they were genuinely interested in our perspective as university students.

I worked together with my partner Hinako, and we decided to target university students and young professionals. The project was free range, and we were encouraged to be as creative as possible. We started by researching how younger people in Japan use social media. We gathered information by creating a survey and sending it out to our classmates and friends. From the data we found that social media is not only used for entertainment but also for gathering information. The more we looked into it, the more we realised how major social media is for our demographic. Around 98% of students use it regularly with many rely on it for facts, news and learning new things in a simple and accessible way.

Based on what we found, we suggested that Shikigaku could expand its online presence on platforms like Instagram, TikTok and X. Instead of relying on formal corporate posts, we recommended creating content that felt more fun, relatable and educational. Short videos, infographics and livestreams that explain simple management ideas, leadership tips or advice for dealing with group work could help the company appear more approachable. I thought Shikigaku could also make content that helps students with everyday struggles, since so many students deal with issues like time management or part-time work stress. If the company shared easy and practical advice it could show younger audiences that management skills aren't just for managers in companies but anyone can use these in their day to day lives.

To get deeper insight, Hinako and I created a survey and sent it to our classmates and friends to get real information. We asked about their SNS habits, what platforms they use to gather information and how they feel about work-life balance. We also introduced the Shikigaku concept to them to see if it resonated with people our age. The responses were very interesting and gave us a clearer understanding of what younger people actually want. Many students want a good balance between work and personal life. They value having time to rest, seeing friends, focusing on hobbies and having clear separation between work and private time. They also care about fulfillment and doing work that feels meaningful. Salary and stability are important, but they want to feel like their job helps them grow. The Shikigaku concept surprisingly resonated with about seventy one percent of respondents, which showed us that there is potential to attract this demographic with the right messaging.

However, despite finding out that fifty seven percent of people were indeed willing to spend money on their career development and personal growth, the same fifty seven percent of people weren't likely to buy the service. We believe this to be due to the service being fully in Japanese which limits a lot

of our friends who mostly speak English to being able to understand the content's teachings. There is also the idea that although the idea to prevent misinformation seems effective and trying to organise the mechanisms leading to wrong actions is interesting, the Shikigaku's teachings are seen as robotic and scary for a younger audience.

Our final thoughts of the overall marketing strategy was that our key findings are that the concept of Shikigaku highly resonates with our target demographic, however areas for improvement is that the message itself fails to convert the strong desire for people to do personal growth into purchase intent. As well as youth priorities being different, as they seek to balance salary with career advancements with a sense of fulfillment in their work to be important. Our strategic recommendations are to shift the messaging focus when dealing with a younger audience to something along the lines of from "Organisational Results" to "Increased management abilities, salary growth and skills development" which appeal more to the youth's self interest to grow as a person. As well as optimising the channels in which Shikigaku operate, by using social media and collaborating with trusted influencers and communities to feature success stories to show people that our service is effective can remove the perceived fear of starting our service.

Even though I enjoyed the internship there were definitely challenges. One of the biggest ones was adjusting to the Japanese office environment. It was much more structured and polite than the workplaces I'm used to in Australia. At my pharmacy job back home, the environment is relaxed and everyone is casual, so stepping into a quiet, formal office felt intimidating at first. I worried about accidentally doing something wrong or not understanding workplace expectations. On top of that, I was working on a consulting-related project despite having little experience in the industry. Understanding Shikigaku's organisational theory took time, and at first I felt unsure about whether I was interpreting everything correctly.

The language barrier was another challenge. Even though our manager and some staff spoke English well, there were still moments when conversations happened too fast for me to fully understand. Sometimes people used terms I had never heard before, and I didn't want to interrupt the flow of discussion. This made me a bit hesitant during the first few days of my internship.

However, once I learned to handle these challenges through communication things became easier. I made an effort to ask for clarification whenever I needed it, instead of pretending to understand. Luckily, the staff were always patient and helpful, and Hinako played a huge part in helping me adjust. She explained cultural nuances and translated things when necessary, which made me feel more comfortable and confident. Over time, I realised that asking questions didn't make me look dumb

rather it showed that I cared about doing the project properly.

For the consulting aspect, I spent time reading through Shikigaku's website, materials and explanations of their theory. Once I understood the company's mission and values on a deeper level, everything became much clearer and I was able to begin working on the marketing proposal. I realised that my role wasn't to become a consultant overnight but to use my marketing background as well as my age and student status to offer an outside perspective. In fact, that outside perspective ended up being exactly what Shikigaku needed to understand how younger audiences think being from a different generation from them all. The whole experience taught me the importance of being adaptable, open-minded and willing to step out of my comfort zone. These skills are important in any workplace, and I know they will help me in the future.

This internship also changed how I think about my future career. Before this experience, I never imagined myself working abroad, but now it feels like a realistic option. Working in Japan, even for only two weeks, made me realise that I enjoy experiencing new environments and learning from different cultures. It gave me confidence that I could adapt to unfamiliar situations and still perform well. I also discovered that I really enjoy the creative side of marketing, especially when it involves researching consumer behaviour or thinking of fun and engaging content ideas. I realised that I enjoy problem-solving and analysing situations, which made consulting more interesting to me than I expected.

The experience also made me think more about the type of workplace I want to be part of. I prefer environments that let me think creatively, communicate openly and explore ideas without too much pressure. Understanding this early on will help me choose future internships and job opportunities that match my strengths and personality.

Overall, my short-term internship at Shikigaku was an extremely valuable experience. It gave me a chance to explore management consulting, understand how Japanese workplaces operate and apply my marketing knowledge to a real company project. I enjoyed every part of working on the marketing strategy, especially researching consumer behaviour and figuring out how to appeal to a younger demographic. Even though the internship lasted just two weeks, it helped me develop new skills, build confidence and think more deeply about my future career path. I am grateful for the EDI program for giving me the chance to participate in this internship. The lessons I learned, both professionally and personally, will stay with me and continue influencing my growth long after the program has ended.

Shikigaku Marketing Strategy: Appealing to a younger demographic

Presented by:
Christian and Hinako from
Ochanomizu University

Presentation Overview

1	2	3
Defining The Research Tasks	The effects of online community	Target / Chosen Demographic
4	5	6
Methods for data gathering	Survey Results	Final Thoughts

Defining The Research Tasks

01 Online Research	02 Target Demographic & Approach Strategies	03 Data Gathering Methods
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the effects of online communities among students, whether or not it is popular. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop strategies for spreading awareness through student word-of-mouth. <p>We break down the strategy into: Where (media), What (message), and Who (target audience).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct interviews and surveys among our peers to evaluate whether the Shikigaku concept resonates with young people.

Task 1: The effects of online communities among students.

- Almost every students use SNS (students who don't use SNS is about 12%)
The time students spend on SNS is getting longer

Reference:

- Many people use SNS not only for amusement but **also for information gathering**.
- Students want to know following contents when gathering information in SNS:
Information **related to what they are interested in**.
Information that is **simple and easy to understand**.
Information that is **accurate based on reliable facts**.

Reference:

According to this data,

- using online communities for advertising would be effective.**
- Other potentially method**
 - Creating connections between **what they like** or **what they are interested in** and **our message**
 - Requesting famous SNS users to collaborate on PR.
 - Posting ads on online communities like job search sites which have many young users.

Task 2: Target Demographic & Approach Strategy

Target Ages 20-30: who are confused about their next life step .	Focused Approach Deep research and targeting of niche groups within the range
Data Collection *Owned Media like X, insta * Paid Advertising * Through Universities	Content Strategy highly engaging content to generate organic word-of-mouth spread .

Task 3: To Evaluate Whether the Shikigaku Concept Resonate with Young People

- Data Gathering method: Conducting a survey
- Where?: Online through our owned media (sent on LINE and insta).
- Who?: Our friends in university.

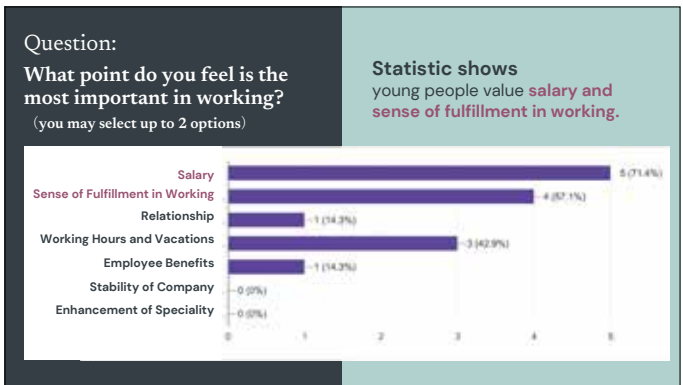
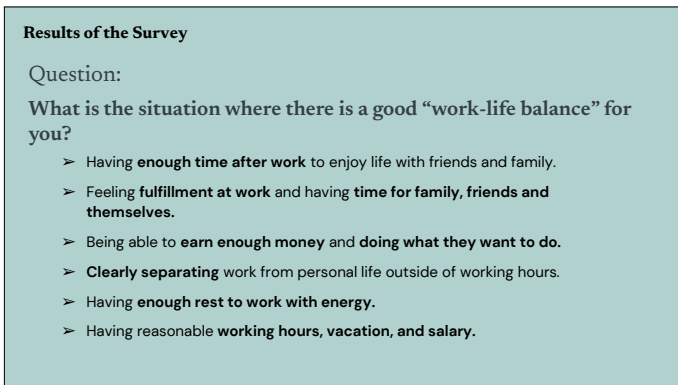
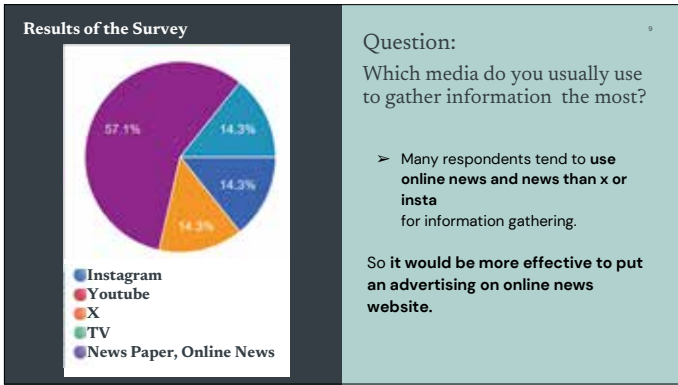
Research Questions

- **About their custom on SNS**
 - their age
 - types of media they usually use to gather information
- **To measure their interest and resonance for Shikigaku concept**
- **About their attitudes toward working and work-life balance, work-life New balance**
 - situation where there is good "work-life balance" for them
 - point they find important in working
 - their honest thoughts for "work-life New balance"
- **To measure their interest for paid online service and HYO-SHIKI**

THE SURVEY

We provided an explanation of Shikigaku and Hyo-shiki and then asked questions accordingly.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FjAPQL5jpc8GmNVLV39NV3Q08A0Aw9r-1kZSwm6KQJghKtaGcRw/viewform?usp=sharing&eid=11776999447226589976>

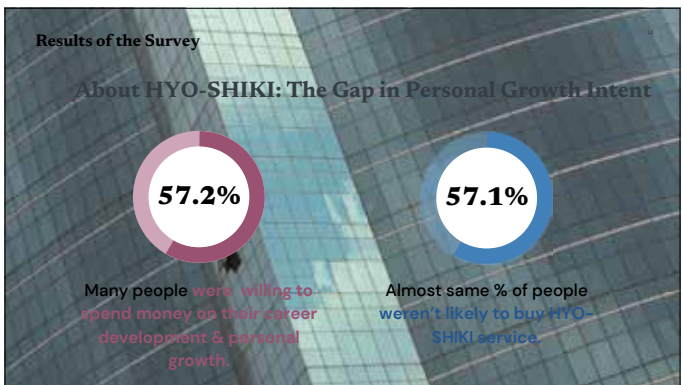


Young people’s actual view on work-life balance

- > They **value free time**, focusing activities outside of work.
- > They **also seek meaning in work**, such as fulfillment and satisfaction.
- > They **want a clear boundary between work and private life.**
- > They **care about practical condition**, such as working hours, vacation and salary.

So young people’s thoughts are usually based on **not negative disliking work but wants to enrich both work and private life.**

Between this conclusion and the Shikigaku’s view..
the area of **agreement: people put boundary between work and life**
the area of **disagreement: people lose value of working**



Final Thoughts

01 Key Findings

Youth Priorities
The demographic seeks to balance “Salary/Career Advancement” with “Sense of Fulfillment” in their work

Concept Potential
The Shikigaku concept highly resonates with the target demographic.

Area for Improvement
The HYO-SHIKI message fails to convert the strong Desire for Personal Growth into Purchase intent.

Final Thoughts

02 Strategic Recommendation

Shift Messaging Focus
The core message must shift from “Organizational Results” to “Increased Market Value and Salary Growth,” directly appealing to **youth self-interest.**

Optimize Channel
Combine the most utilized channel, “Online News,” with trusted “Influencers/Communities” to feature **concrete success stories** and remove the perceived “fear” of the service.

Internship Experience at Nippon Koei

S.Nguyen (University of Technology Sydney, AUSTRALIA)

Introduction

This summer, I had the great opportunity to participate in a short-term 2-week internship at Nippon Koei through the EDI program at Ochanomizu University. Although the internship was only two weeks, it provided me with a great amount of insight and opportunity to learn within a professional corporate environment in Japan. It was a meaningful experience that pushed me academically, professionally, and personally. In this reflection, I hope to outline what I learnt through those two weeks about Nippon Koei as a company, the work I was involved in, the challenges I faced, how I navigated those challenges, and the implications this experience has had on my future.

1. Reflection about Experience

1.1 About Nippon Koei

Nippon Koei is Japan's largest international construction consulting firm. They specialize in civil construction, infrastructure development, environmental consulting, and a broad range of sustainability related services in both private and public sectors. They frequently work internationally with branches spread across the world. Before beginning the internship, I did not understand what "construction consulting" was. I simply assumed it involved designing buildings or planning infrastructure. It involves much more than the actual construction itself. It's involved in the before, during and after of the construction process, encompassing environmental impact assessments, sustainability strategy, human rights due diligence, SDG alignment, and international development projects in countries around the world.

What I found very interesting was how interdisciplinary civil construction consulting was. It wasn't just focused on engineering. Civil engineering, environmental science, sustainability consulting, community development, and human rights considerations all play an interconnected role in their projects. Even though I am not majoring in engineering or environmental studies, I found it fascinating how Nippon Koei integrates social and environmental safeguards into every stage of project planning. For example, through my interactions with the Environmental Team, I learned how detailed environmental assessments are. Consultants investigate not just the physical layout of a construction site, but also the wildlife, the surrounding ecosystem, local biodiversity, and the potential impact on stakeholders. More specifically, during one meeting, the Environmental Team explained how they track the breeding seasons of the birds in the area of construction to ensure they do not interfere with

their natural biological process, and if it's unavoidable, they work closely with ecologists to safely relocate them to another area.

This was my first time seeing how large Japanese companies operate behind the scenes, especially within a field I had almost no background in. Despite not having a foundation in engineering or sustainability, I found myself becoming increasingly interested in this field because Nippon Koei showed me how broad and impactful it could be.

1.2 Internship Assignment and Main Project

I was assigned primarily to the Sustainability Design Team, although I also worked closely with the Environmental Team and their interns through field excursions, cross-team meetings, and combined final presentations. That was also an aspect that surprised me – that the nature of internships in Japanese work culture was so different from the Western perception of what an internship should be like. Our internship was very structured and guided. My initial expectations of this internship were therefore completely different from what I ended up experiencing. My own knowledge of what an internship in Australia is like was helping out with real tasks for a few months to get a sense of what it is like to truly work in the company. What I experienced felt like a short-term workshop that felt more educational in learning about Nippon Koei rather than what it would be like to really work at Nippon Koei. It was also completely unpaid and we didn't do any actual work that contributes to the company's daily processes. During our meetings and field trips, the Nippon Koei introduced every aspect of their company's main business processes, even going so far as to give us a tour of the benefits of their company which included a gym in the basement and a rooftop garden where employees could join a gardening club.

This is also when I found out that most of the other interns were graduate students pursuing their postgraduate degrees in very specialized fields. For example, one intern had presented their final presentation on how the design and implementation of trees in public infrastructure and architecture affects the public, demonstrating how specific breeds of trees could be utilized to lessen the impact of roots overgrowing and breaking concrete, though a lot may have been lost in translation as I was struggling to keep up with the language barrier, which I will discuss more in depth later.

Moving onto our main project. It involved researching corporate human rights practices and producing a comparative analysis of two global companies (Nestle and Unilever) and two Japanese companies (Ajinomoto and 7&i Holdings). There was an extremely large focus on SDGs and human rights practices throughout our time working there to the point that I have now noticed SDG implementation everywhere in Japan outside of my internship. After gathering and synthesizing our

research, we applied the knowledge to a fictional case study, where we developed a human rights risk map and proposed remediation actions for a hypothetical company facing supply chain labour concerns. This culminated in 2 versions of the same 20-minute presentation: a preliminary half English half Japanese presentation to the members of the Sustainability Design Office for feedback; and a finalised fully Japanese presentation to managers from both the Sustainability and Environmental Teams.

Preparing and presenting in both languages was so stressful yet rewarding. I remember feeling extremely nervous about the Japanese presentation in particular, not just because of my limited vocabulary and pronunciation, but also because it involved presenting to management from multiple branches in cities across Japan, not just in Tokyo. In the end, though, the presentation went smoothly, and many attendees told us they appreciated the effort I put into presenting in Japanese, even praising my pronunciation as some sections, saying it sounded so natural despite only having one day to prepare. That reassurance meant a lot to me.

1.3 Overcoming Challenges and Difficulties

The language barrier was my biggest challenge. The half English and half Japanese mode in which the internship was conducted created a few pain points. This was however, a positive and a negative. The Sustainability Design Office which I mainly worked with communicated mostly in English to me, however the Environmental Team used only Japanese. This was a tension point that made me very stressed initially and also out of place at times, however I was able to resolve it through the use of machine translation such as Google Translate, which helped live translate what was being said through the transcript option.

However, at times I felt like I wasn't able to convey my true self, skills, and knowledge very well as my Japanese skill was limited, so I stayed silent most of the time. When prompted to ask questions during meetings, I felt extremely anxious as I wasn't even sure if I had interpreted the contents correctly.

I also felt the language barrier very strongly when preparing for the final presentation in Japanese. Thanks to my supervisors and buddy checking over the machine translation of my script, I was not worried that what I was saying was incorrect, however I was mainly concerned about my pronunciation, tone, and speed of my speech. I had never spoken Japanese in such a formal setting before, only speaking short sentences in informal settings, usually never using business level 'keigo', therefore I was terrified. But everyone was very supportive and patient with me, and my buddy also worked hard to overcome my shortcomings by speaking a bit faster in her parts. I felt very grateful in that moment

for having someone so reliable by my side.

Another challenge was my lack of knowledge in the field combined with the language barrier. Despite having studied corporate social responsibility and knowing of SDGs beforehand, I wasn't able to really translate that knowledge here due to the different methods of Japanese companies and context in which they exist. And also, due to my knowledge being extremely preliminary and shallow. I overcame this with a lot of reading and research of key terms.

The final challenge was time management. The internship schedule was surprisingly packed. Between excursions, introductory meetings, office work, and preparing the final project, there was barely any spare time. There were several days where we returned from long field visits and still had to work on research or slide preparation for the presentation. And because we both lacked knowledge of this field, we had to work twice as hard to read research materials and fully grasp what was written, which slowed us down during the initial preparation. We had two meetings almost daily where our supervisors would check up on our progress, and I remember feeling so ashamed and fumbling for new points to discuss with them as it felt like we weren't making any progress in the early days because we were trying so hard to understand what we were researching whilst still fleshing out the key points we wanted to discuss due to time and slide constraints in the presentation. Eventually, we worked out an efficient rhythm, estimating the time taken for tasks, and separating our tasks into manageable blocks. I also learnt after meetings with the supervisors that we were actually going more in depth than we needed to and had too much information, so we worked to only grab key, interesting points, demonstrating quality over quantity. We also realised that we needed to – like real Japanese salary women – do a bit of overtime at home after leaving work to ensure everything was completed.

2. Conclusion and Implications for Future

This internship has had several significant impacts on my future academic and career interests. Firstly, it sparked my interest in sustainability consulting, particularly the relationship between corporate practice, human rights, and environmental responsibility. I had never considered that companies used structured frameworks like ESGs, UNGPs, or SDG assessment tools to guide their decisions. Seeing how these frameworks are applied in real corporate settings made me curious about how they might function in other countries, especially Australia. The extra knowledge I gained is also very valuable to me, as I love having a multifaceted view of a company's operations and different sectors.

Secondly, this experience also made me realise the importance of cross-cultural communication skills, especially in professional environments. Being able to switch between languages, adapt my

communication style, and work alongside people from different fields has given me confidence that I can operate in multicultural workplaces in the future. I also met two part time employees who actually had very little Japanese skills like me, and came from countries outside of Japan. Their stories also inspired me, and made me realise that even without Japanese language skills, they could still thrive in a Japanese working environment. However, the importance of language was not lost to me. I felt more than ever, motivated to continue studying Japanese more seriously. Presenting in Japanese reminded me that while I can manage everyday conversation, professional communication is an entirely different skillset. I now feel more determined to improve my academic and business Japanese so that I can engage more deeply with future opportunities in Japan.

Lastly, the experience broadened my view of what's possible within my academic journey. Even though my major is not directly connected to engineering or environmental consulting, I realised that sustainability and human rights are topics that intersect with almost every industry. This has encouraged me to stay open to interdisciplinary paths and not limit myself to my one-track minded goal of only working in a specific sector that I'm interested in, but that I also have the ability to gain interest in anywhere I enter. I realised I had felt this way previously too, as my previous long-term job was at a plumbing and civil construction firm in Australia, and despite having no interest beforehand, I came to enjoy learning more and more about the business I was engaged in and actually sought to learn more actively during work. Therefore, I've gained insight into my adaptability and love for knowledge in any field that may appear. Reflecting on my two weeks at Nippon Koei, I can confidently say that the internship was challenging, transformative, and genuinely inspiring. Despite moments of self-doubt, language struggles, and unfamiliar technical concepts, I grew immensely through the experience. I realised I am also someone who is capable of adapting, learning, and contributing even in unfamiliar and uncomfortable environments. In addition, the support of the Sustainability Design Office, the patience of the Environmental Team, and the guidance we received throughout made the internship enjoyable and meaningful.

This internship was a short experience, but I will carry these lessons with me as I continue my studies and explore future opportunities, both in Japan and beyond.

Exploring Environmental and Human Rights Consulting at Nippon Koei

2025.11.05 @Ochanomizu University

Overview

Introduction	3
Company & Working Environment	5
Project work	7
Outcomes & Reflection	10
Closing	13

Internship Overview

Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thu.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.
1 Introduction of work & set up	2	3 Site visit w/ environmental team	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 Site visit w/ environmental team	11 Initial presentation for feedback	12 Final presentation	13	14

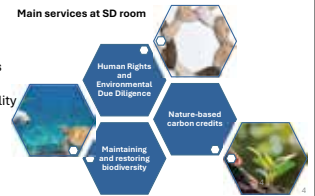
About Nippon Koei

Founded: 1946
Headquarters: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, Japan
Business: Engineering consulting and infrastructure development
Global Reach: Projects in over 160 countries
Mission: Contribute to society through technology and integrity

Nippon Koei Co., Ltd. is Japan's leading engineering consulting firm, with a global presence and over 75 years of experience in infrastructure development.

Sustainability design Room

Nippon Koei's Sustainability Design Room provides comprehensive consulting services to help companies and municipalities advance sustainability management and SDGs initiatives.



Internship environment

Tools, resources, guidance provided

- Due Diligence guidance for responsible business conduct
- Assigned PC, Desks
- Cafeteria for Lunch



Project Work

1

Human Rights Research

- Defined human rights and various violations
- Researched human rights related laws
- Compiled the various human rights violations and remediations of 4 companies (Nestle, Unilever, Ajinomoto, 7&i Holdings)



Project Work

2

Fictional Case Study

- Applied the human rights knowledge we gained towards identifying and solving the human rights issues of a given fictional case study
- Created a risk map based off real world business applications, creating our own scope and guidelines
- Created an action plan to resolve the most salient, high risk human rights risks



Project Work

3

Present to SD and Environmental Teams

- Create a presentation with regular progress meetings with supervisors
- Initially presented to the Sustainability Design team and made changes based on feedback
- Presented the final version to both SD and environmental teams



Challenges & Solutions

- 1 Language Barrier**
Machine translation, translating for each other, asking for clarification
- 2 Lack of knowledge in field**
Preliminary research on relevant topics and keywords, asking questions and actively listen during briefings
- 3 Time management**
Set deadlines and daily goals, divide tasks efficiently, and checking in with supervisors to reprioritise
- 4 Working with different cultures**
Divided work based on skills and language

Learning Outcomes

Time management	Cross-cultural learning	Professional skills	Sustainability Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance and prioritise various tasks amongst meetings and site visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen cross-cultural collaboration and bilingual communication skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teamwork, research, and presentation in both English and Japanese Build confidence in interacting with professionals and presenting to large audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gain practical insight into sustainability design, ESGs, and human rights frameworks in Japan's construction industry

Reflection

- Juggling multiple tasks simultaneously was very hard
- Until then, I had never heard of the concept of business and human rights, so it was difficult to grasp the concept and carefully read materials on the subject.
- I could gain fresh perspectives and precise advice at each meeting
- We received fascinating case study topics and were able to gain valuable experiences

- I found it difficult to manage my time between the various tasks in the short time frame
- I learnt briefly about CSR in university so these concepts were familiar to me but applying it was difficult as I found it hard to integrate Japanese laws I wasn't familiar with
- I didn't know much about sustainability before so it was interesting to learn a lot from the various meetings in different fields
- I really appreciated my time here and will take what I learnt and hopefully I can apply these perspectives in my work in Australia

Conclusion & Future goals

- ✓ Gain corporate business experience in Japan
- ✓ Enhance my professional competencies, including collaboration, career readiness, and an understanding of inclusive business practices.

➔



- I hope I can apply these perspectives in my work in Australia.
- I'd like to consider the working conditions in the construction sector and human rights risks during the material procurement stage.



Acknowledgements and Q&A

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to:
 Everyone at the host company for their warm guidance and support;
 The coordinators who made this internship program possible;
 And everyone here today for listening to our presentation

Thank you very much!

Learning Experiences and EDI at KINOKUNIYA COMPANY LTD.

C.Orogan (University of Technology Sydney, Australia)

As part of the EDI Program at Ochanomizu University, I participated in the short-term internship program during the summer break with my partner Natsuki, a Japanese student from the same university. My internship had a full-time structure over the course of two weeks in mid-August. The company which I interned at was KINOKUNIYA COMPANY LTD., the largest bookstore chain in Japan founded in 1927, with several stores operating in overseas countries as well. The company is involved in the retail industry, practicing the sale of not only Japanese books, but also international books, pop-culture goods, stationary and digital products. This reflection will draw upon the activities and tasks performed during the internship, encountered challenges, and future implications resulting from the internship experience.

Through the duration of the internship, I participated in a variety of activities. For the first few days, there were many informative seminars about the company, different departments of the company and industry. My partner and I then experienced some interactive activities, such as university and store visits, content creation, data organization and media making. Some particularly engaging activities during the internship were the Shinjuku store observations, POP creation, National diet library tour and interview with the Sydney Kinokuniya branch staff. In addition to these activities, my partner and I were tasked with thinking about the topic; *from an EDI perspective, the future role of bookstores and what Kinokuniya can do*. Taking this project topic into consideration, over the two weeks of internship activities we simultaneously prepared our ideas for the final project presentation. Going into the main office in Meguro, I walked in with an open mind-not sure what to expect and came out with a piece of new knowledge every day.

On the first day of the internship, we had an initial meeting with our supervisor, Ms. Akimitsu. She explained the schedule and activities to us, then we joined the first seminar. It was quite a surprise to both Natsuki and I that our first week of activities were mostly together with a group of job-hunting university students, but I found this to also add to making it a great and unique experience, given the opportunity to communicate to a group of Japanese students about their careers and what they were looking for with Kinokuniya. The biggest challenge on this day and for the next few days to come though, would be the usage of Japanese all throughout the first weeks' seminars and activities. I sought to take this as a learning opportunity- and spent a lot of time during the seminars translating, seeking

to understand the meaning and creating vocabulary lists. Seeking to practice this active learning, and with the assistance of Natsuki, I was able to get through these initial activities. The biggest takeaway from these initial seminars was the company's underlying value placed upon their three pillars: store operations, sales, and overseas business. These pillars would come to be the basis for our future activities and final presentation as well.

Among the activities we performed during the internship, I would consider the ones involving creative means as the most stimulating or exciting. This would be the creation of POPs – Point of Purchase advertising cards, in addition to poster and social media content creation. It was unexpectedly fun to be able to do these types of activities during the internship, as I had expected more of a rigid, sit-down in front of a computer type of schedule. The activities included in the internship held a commendable amount of diversity- enough to make every day different and engaging in its own way. Another particularly engaging activity which stood out to me would be the interview with the Sydney Kinokuniya department on day 9 of the internship. Being immersed in the Japanese side of the business for the prior duration, engaging with an overseas branch, particularly the one from my home country was a pleasant surprise. I spoke to the Sydney team about their business operations and implementation of EDI, to which I was to compare with the Japanese branch's practices which I had observed and provide recommendations. This type of activity was a very valuable experience for me as it combined the aspects of international business, business strategy, human resources and EDI which I am interested in.

The days of the internship passed by in a quickly, and before I knew it the two weeks were coming to an end. The final day of the internship was dedicated to our final presentation, addressing the allocated topic given our lived experiences and knowledge gained throughout the two weeks. Natsuki and I worked together from the morning to collate our thoughts and put everything together for the presentation. In our presentation to the Kinokuniya team, we discussed our observations, EDI witnessed within their organization, and our recommendations for where we thought they could improve. Our recommendations consisted of three main points: store design / accessibility, global connection, and improving company culture. We sought to provide reasonable and actionable solutions which the company could easily consider, given the company's 100-year anniversary is also soon to approach. When considering EDI for these recommendations, we centered our approaches around creating diversity and inclusivity amongst people, products and location. For example, one of our recommendations for global connection included the implementation of a medium-term overseas exchange for Kinokuniya staff, intended to unify their global culture. By allowing internal staff the opportunity to experience overseas business operations and likewise showcase the Japan operations to foreign Kinokuniya branch staff, a stronger international talent pool is developed, bringing new ideas and innovation to the company. This increases EDI amongst the staff and company by giving

opportunities for cultural exchange and encouraging open-mindedness and collaboration between staff of different cultures.

For the duration of the internship, however, I undeniably did face some challenges. The first and foremost challenge I faced prior to beginning the internship was my lack of knowledge in the industry and lack of experience in the field. However, given my experiences in a variety of other positions with transferable soft skills, I was able to feel less nervous about what was expected of me. I took some time to read and understand the required skills which they shared in the job description and was able to mentally prepare to some degree. The Japanese language aspect particularly was a bit worrying for me, as the description indicated a required Japanese proficiency of 4/5, which I am not yet to possess. However, having my buddy Natsuki with me was a significant help as she could support me with anything difficult in Japanese, and I could support her for the activities requiring English. Despite my mental preparation efforts, the language barrier was undeniably a difficult challenge as mentioned earlier, to which I sought to approach with a positive mindset and learn what I could from.

The second challenge faced during the internship would be differences in working culture between Australia and Japan. While some differences such as language are obvious, there were more subtle differences in culture which proved to be a challenge. The first experience of this, would be on my first day of the internship, although it wasn't a huge issue- figuring out the dress code. My clothes on the day; a blue short-sleeved blouse and beige trousers did match the 'summer business casual' code, I was surprised when I walked into the room of other interns and found that everyone was wearing very similar formal attire- white blouses and dark pants, which made me feel a bit out of place in the moment. I don't think it was much of an issue, but it made me further realize how Japan places large value onto conformity and collectiveness. If I were to compare it to Australia, even in an initial job interview situation, people tend to showcase individuality and character through the details of the clothes they wear. Another culture difference that challenged me a bit would be time management. In Australia, although timeliness is preferred, there noticeably less pressure placed upon being on time. For example, university classes will sometimes begin their content 5-10 minutes after the designated start time as that is when majority of students will have arrived. Prior to coming to Japan, I was aware of the large value and importance placed on being on time, and so I needed to try to change what I was used to, as I previously had a habit of arriving just on time to five minutes late back in Sydney. Although there were some days where I was just on time, I was able to pleasantly surprise myself by being 5-10 minutes early most days of the internship, which gave me a few minutes to sit down and breathe before getting into the work of the day. Despite it being a challenge to change my lifestyle habits, practicing arriving a bit earlier felt good as I was able to have more time to mentally prepare before beginning. I would like to continue to try to practice being earlier in the future as well.

Despite the challenges faced throughout the internship, the skills and experiences gained hold significant value for my current and future self. From being able to practice Japanese every day, experiencing the realities of Japanese culture, to learning more about the international business and retail industries. The internship experience allowed me to deepen my thoughts about what career path I want to follow, as before I knew I wanted to do something related to international business between Australia and Japan but wasn't too sure about the specifics. Taking the experience gained from the internship into account, and having a peek into the retail / bookstore industry, I feel that I gained a bit more clarity on the type of industries which I want to pursue a career in. Considering my passion for connecting people, providing meaningful experiences, and international connection, I've come to think that I want to pursue something related to creating international relations, events, travel, or retail. Although it is still a broad range of options, I feel more confident knowing that I have a stronger awareness of what I am interested in and have passion for. Experiencing the internship in unison with the EDI program has led me to further realize the importance of EDI in different contexts, industries and workplaces. There is a large difference in just learning about EDI in classes versus seeking to realize it in a real business context involving real people and operations, which I am grateful to have had the opportunity to experience.

To summarize, my two-week internship at Kinokuniya Company Ltd. was a profoundly enriching experience that transcended my expectations of a typical corporate placement. Despite the initial hurdles of the language barrier and the nuances of Japanese professional etiquette, the collaborative spirit I shared with Natsuki and the welcoming nature of the staff I interacted with allowed me to turn these challenges into catalysts for growth.

Integrating the EDI program's principles into a real-world business context provided a unique lens through which to view the future of the retail industry. Brainstorming and proposing actionable recommendations deepened my understanding of how diversity and inclusion can drive innovation and global unity within a century-old institution. This journey has not only increased my confidence in navigating international business environments but has also sharpened my career aspirations. I walk away with a newfound appreciation for the intersection of cultural exchange and commerce, feeling more inspired to pursue a career that fosters international relations between Australia and Japan. Through this experience, I have learned that while globalization and labor markets are complex, the human connection found in shared projects and mutual learning remains the most powerful tool for professional and personal development.

Learning Experiences & EDI at Kinokuniya

Ochanomizu University Student Interns



Today's Agenda



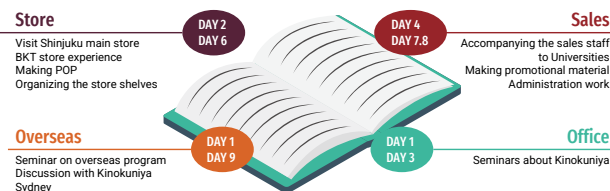
- 01 Introduction**
Self Introduction, Program Summary, EDI
- 02 Current Situation**
Our observations of Kinokuniya during the internship
- 03 Recommendations**
Suggestions based on our observations
- 04 Conclusion**

Importance of EDI

Equity (公平性), Diversity (多様性) and Inclusion (包摂性)



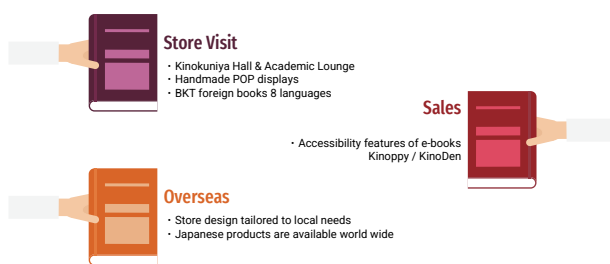
Program Summary ・ 2 週間のまとめ



Current Situation 現状



Strong points we observed during the 2 week program



Recommendations 提案

Roadmap to 100 Year Anniversary



1. Store Design / Accessibility

Language Availability

Name tags showing what languages staff can speak

- Eg. English, Chinese, Sign language
- Customers feel more comfortable engaging with staff -> increased sales



Product Selection

Stationary and other goods to attract younger groups of customers

- Character collaborations (like Miffy goods)
- Common in overseas stores
- Utilising Shinjuku store's theatre
- EDI-related showcases

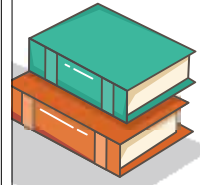


!Kinokuniya Seattle

Here's the current Global Home page of Kinokuniya



2. Global Connection



Kinokuniya Virtual Store

紀伊國屋書店 バーチャル新宿本店 (店内を360°ビューで体験) | 紀伊國屋書店 - 本の「今」に会いに行こう

- Creating virtual store for other locations around the world



Kinokuniya Global

Books Kinokuniya in the World 100th Anniversary Promotion can create global connection

- Global Events; Stores sharing news from other countries can create more connection
- Through Blog, Instagram Story, etc



2. Global Connection



Overseas Exchange

- **Duration:** 6-month, full-time exchange.
- **Participants:** Staff from overseas branches.
- **Host Location:** Kinokuniya Head Office or main stores in Japan.

Phase 1: Preparation (Month 1)

- **Goal:** Introduce participants to Kinokuniya Japan culture and business operations.
- **Activities:** Cultural orientation, basic language lessons, project introduction.

Phase 2: Core Work (Months 2-5)

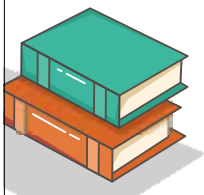
- **Goal:** Hands-on work on a strategic project / Working experience alongside JP colleagues
- **Activities:**
 - Work on a project in a specific department (e.g., Marketing, Merchandising).
 - Collaborate with various teams.
 - Receive mentorship and professional training.

Phase 3: Final Integration (Month 6)

- **Goal:** Present findings and share knowledge.
- **Activities:**
 - Final project presentation to senior management.
 - Post-program evaluation and feedback.
 - Knowledge-sharing session with home branch.



2. Global Connection



Key Benefits

- **For Kinokuniya:**
 - Creates a unified global company culture.
 - Develops a strong international talent pool.
 - Brings new ideas and innovation to the head office.
- **For Staff:**
 - Provides professional development and new skills.
 - Builds a strong global network.
 - Boosts career growth opportunities.

3. Improving Company Culture

Culture Day

World Cultural Diversity Day (対話と発展のための世界文化多様性デー)

- Office & Store staff can participate
- Share a piece of culture from your hometown (food, item)
- Staff can socialise, learn more about business operations -> increase in employee morale, community and company knowledge
- Can connect with overseas branches as well -> Increase EDI awareness

Foundation Day

January 22

- Staff come together to celebrate Kinokuniya
- Opportunity for staff to connect with other departments



Conclusion



- Kinokuniya can strengthen its future by embracing EDI values in staffing, customer experience, and product offerings.
- Expanding international accessibility, promoting diverse voices, and using technology like virtual stores will not only help meet global expectations, but also increase profitability.
- These steps will strengthen Kinokuniya's ability to remain relevant, inclusive, and grow as an International Japanese company.

Reflections on my experience at Toyo System

D. M. Prochacka (Ochanomizu University, JAPAN)

1. Introduction

In this report, I would like to summarize and reflect on my experiences participating in a roughly two-week internship at Toyo System, organized by Ochanomizu University. The internship is part of a larger program called the Global Internship program, which strives to foster good relations between partner universities from countries such as the USA, UK and Australia, while promoting themes such as EDI (equity, diversity and inclusion). I was selected to participate at Toyo System's two-week internship program together with my partner, Miyu, who is also an Ochanomizu University student. In the following sections, I would like to introduce our host company, then move onto a description of our tasks and experiences at Toyo System, followed by the challenges we faced along the way. At the very end, I would like to provide my reflections on the entire experience.

2. Host Company: Toyo System

Toyo System is both a battery manufacturing and evaluating company that has been in business for over 35 years. Their products and services extend into many sectors, including housing, education, medicine, transportation and construction. They create and evaluate batteries for a wide variety of things, including smartphones, medical equipment, and electric vehicles. Their headquarters is located in Iwaki City in Fukushima Prefecture, but they have branches set up throughout Japan and even abroad (in Ohio, USA). Not only do they provide goods and services, they also are heavily involved in the community and humanitarian work, providing workshops for school students to learn how to assemble fuel cells, or even experience going for a drive in a hydrogen-powered car or bus. Toyo System is actively working towards finding carbon neutral solutions, and to do this, they are working with partners both within Japan, such as Toyota, and outside of Japan, by hosting seminars with university students in Thailand to create solutions to climate challenges together.

3. Our experiences and tasks

3.1 The First Day

We began our two-week internship by taking a day trip to Toyo System's headquarters to Iwaki City in Fukushima Prefecture. When we arrived, we were shown into a room with a group of other students from participating universities and given a brief introduction to the company and its history by the CEO. From there, we went together as a group on a short tour of the headquarters and were shown

around the different parts of the factory, including:

- Where they make their batteries and what kinds of batteries they produce
- Where batteries are evaluated: x-ray battery scanning (non-invasive testing) and needle-based testing (invasive testing), as well as the methods used to ensure safety during testing
- Storage units for emergencies, such as the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 (these units contained emergency rations enough for 1000 people)

After the tour, we were split into small groups and given two teamwork building tasks. The first task was to assemble the tallest tower we possibly could using only newspapers. This task challenged our communication and creative thinking skills, as newspapers are soft and difficult to use for such a task. My team and I did not win the challenge, but were able to reflect on how we might have improved upon our designs in the future thanks to several rounds of doing the exercise together.

The second task was to brainstorm a new office layout that could accommodate four different branches with specific needs and characteristics (e.g. Team A has lots of meetings, Team B and Team C work on projects a lot together, Team D uses the printer a lot). This challenge again stimulated our creativity and pushed us to engage more actively in discussion on how we thought the new office layout should be like. I was impressed by the logical thinking and creativity of my teammates, as well as the ideas the opposing team set forth for their office layout.

At the end of the day, we had a small Q&A session with some of the senior employees of the company and got to ask questions about what work at Toyo System is like. They were very accommodating and friendly, and answered all our questions openly.

During the Day 1 tour, I could not help but notice that the majority of employees at Toyo System seemed to be male, able-bodied, Japanese people. This led me to want to investigate how Toyo System could diversify its employee base, by hiring more female employees, or foreign staff, or employees with special needs.

3.2 Fuel Cell Workshop for Elementary School Students

On the third day of the internship, we were invited to the Iwaki City headquarters with one of our professors to participate in a fuel cell assembly workshop aimed at elementary school students. Our task was to play the role of the students, while the staff used the workshop as a practice session for an event they would be holding at a later time for a broader audience. We were instructed first through a mini lecture on how fuel cells work, by reviewing how oxygen and hydrogen combine to form water, and how in that process energy is released. It is that energy that powers the fuel cell, which can be used to power cars and be considered a form of clean energy. We worked with the staff to carefully assemble the fuel cells and eventually were able to make a small remote-control-sized car run with the finished products. The experience was incredibly rewarding and entertaining. Through it, I became curious how many of the participating students were foreigners, or if they had workshops that included

children with disabilities. I also noticed that in comparison to the factory tour, where we saw a larger number of male workers in the battery evaluation and assembly positions, there were slightly more female employees involved, especially in the educational and social aspects of the workshops.

3.3 Online Lectures

For all the remaining days of the internship, me and my partner Miyu were invited to participate in lectures via Zoom on Toyo System's founding, history, the challenges it faced against other competitors, and the goals and prospects for the future. We were tasked with taking notes and actively participating in Q&A sessions after every session, both to understand the company better, and provide feedback on what we learned. I was struck by the fact that even though it was organized just for the two of us, every single lecture was held by the CEO himself, and how involved and passionate he was about the work he was doing. I was able to see how Toyo System is not just a for-profit company, but a larger community that tries to build, support, and foster purpose across all ages and societies, no matter how great the challenge. I saw how much the Toyo System team cares about humanitarian work and reviving the community in Iwaki City, especially in the wake of the Fukushima Nuclear Meltdown, which caused a large part of its population to move away, leading to a worsening local economy. It made me want to find ways of promoting and broadcasting Toyo System's ideals beyond just Iwaki City, and even beyond just Japan.

3.4 Final Project

After the final session, we were tasked with making a final presentation with the theme "What should Toyo System do to achieve its 100-year goal" and present it in person at the Iwaki City headquarters. After careful consideration and lots of research, we concluded that Toyo System could benefit from the following changes:

- Expanding existing programs, such as the workshops, to promote female empowerment (women in STE(A)M) and persons with disabilities
- Expanding Toyo System's business presence to even more distant parts of Japan, such as Kyushu
- Setting up a marketing team to promote Toyo System's philosophy and goals both within Japan and abroad
- Expanding Toyo System's electric vehicle business in Europe by setting up a branch in Poland, which has access to ports, and large EV consumers such as Germany, France and the Netherlands
- Increasing participation in international humanitarian programs, such as UNICEF, so that Toyo System's humanitarian efforts can reach the global scale
- Hiring young, SNS-savvy staff with linguistic, marketing and tech capabilities

On the day of the presentation, we were quite nervous, but we did our best to present our ideas clearly and engage in a lively discussion afterwards with the CEO and top branch managers. We were treated with the utmost courtesy and even taken to a tour of the city's fossil and coal museum afterwards, which was delightful.

4. Challenges we faced

Throughout the internship, I faced some minor difficulties that challenged my creative thinking and patience skills. Firstly, since I am a foreigner, I struggle oftentimes to express myself and understand what is going on around me in Japanese. When I joined the Global Internship program, I initially thought that the internship was going to be in English, but it turned out to be fully in Japanese instead. This was a bit challenging for me, but in the end, I am glad to have done it in Japanese, as I was able to practice taking notes, asking questions, using business manners and being in a business setting entirely in Japanese. I think the experience overall was extremely rewarding and beneficial to me as a foreigner hoping to stay in Japan.

Secondly, in the middle of the internship, my partner suddenly fell sick and could not attend a portion of the online lectures with me. This meant I had to attend the lectures alone, again, taking notes and asking questions entirely in Japanese on my own. I felt a bit of pressure to get everything right, as I felt I might have to do the work for both of us and pass the information along to my partner afterwards. I was also unsure of whether the CEO was uncomfortable with giving the lectures to only me. However, everything went much smoother than I anticipated, and I was able to ask and listen freely, as the CEO made all efforts to give the lectures in an understandable, clear way, and was very open to answering all of my questions afterwards.

5. Conclusion

Overall, I found the experience at Toyo System to have been extremely rewarding and important. I learned a lot about how important it is to test the safety of batteries, and what technologies are being developed to create a more sustainable world. I saw how Toyo System is working with people of all ages to encourage them to find their passions, live their dreams, and learn, especially about how science works in the real world. I found everyone at Toyo System to be wonderfully accommodating and genuine.

Going forwards, I hope to be able to apply not just the business manners and culture skills I practiced during the internship, but to also stay flexible to change and open minded during my studies and potential future career in Japan.

What we learned at our internship at Toyo System

Ochanomizu University

Contents

1. About Toyo System
2. The internship:
 1. Company introduction and tour
 2. Team-building exercises
 3. Fuel cell workshop
 4. Online lectures
3. Our final project: how to make Toyo System a 100-year company?
4. Reflections

1. About Toyo System

- **Features & Initiatives**
 - Supports research and development of high-performance secondary batteries through advanced testing technologies
 - Collaborates with clients to address current and future technical challenges in the energy field
 - Builds research teams composed of highly skilled and experienced engineers
- **Philosophy & Vision**
 - *“Contributing to the world through technological innovation in the energy industry”*
 - Actively supports the development of secondary batteries for hybrid cars, electric vehicles, and care robots
 - Aims to balance **environmental preservation** and **technological innovation** under the motto *“Creating products loved around the world”*

2. The internship

Company tour, team-building exercises, fuel cell workshop, and more

2.1: Company introduction and tour

Battery evaluation



Battery production



2.2: Team building exercises

Challenge 1: Newspaper tower

- Create the highest possible structure using ten sheets of newspaper



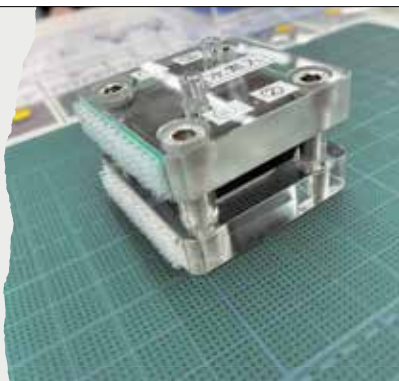
Challenge 2: Office layout brainstorming

- Our team worked together to design a better layout for the office furniture.



2.3: Fuel cell workshop

- **Fuel Cell Activity**
- Assembled the fuel cell step by step in the correct order
- Fuel cells are environmentally friendly → produce electricity with **water as the only byproduct**
- The fuel cell we built is the same type used in **fuel cell vehicles**




2.4: Online lectures about Toyo System

- Lectures held entirely by the CEO himself:
- History of the company and the challenges it faced
- Company philosophy and work environment
- CSR and reviving Iwaki City after the 2011 Earthquake



3. Our final project: presentation



Topic: How to make Toyo System a 100-year company?

3. Final presentation

Things we noticed:

1. Low number of female employees outside of office work roles
2. No foreign employees or persons with disabilities
3. No marketing team
4. Limited access abroad

3. Final presentation

What we proposed:

1. More workshops for female participants
2. Diversifying employee base
3. Creating a marketing team
4. Setting up more branches within Japan and abroad (Poland)



4. Reflections

What our internship at Toyo System could mean for the future



4. Reflections on the internship

- The importance of having a "reason" (きっかけ) early on in life
- The importance of community
- Not giving up when the going gets tough, finding solutions
- Stay curious, keep asking "why?"



References

- Toyo System official website: <https://toyo-system.co.jp/>
- Images provided by Toyo System's official website and Microsoft PowerPoint Stock Images

My experience teaching English at the Ochanomizu Elementary School

D. M. Prochacka (Ochanomizu University, JAPAN)

Introduction

In this report, I would like to present my experiences participating in a roughly three month long-term internship at Ochanomizu's affiliated elementary school (Ochanomizu Elementary School), alongside my partner, Erian Stewart (USA). This internship was the latter half of a larger program called the Global Internship program, which strives to foster good relations between partner universities from countries such as the USA, UK and Australia, while promoting themes such as EDI (equity, diversity and inclusion). Erian and I were invited to participate in the elementary school's English classes, where we were to assist the head teacher, Ms. Hama, in engaging and supporting the students. In the following sections, I would like to give a description of the elementary school, then move onto describing the internship month by month, highlighting major events, tasks, and challenges we faced along the way. At the very end, I would like to provide my reflections on the entire experience.

2. About Ochanomizu Elementary School

Ochanomizu Elementary School is a prestigious elementary school with a long history, having been founded in 1877 initially under the name "Tokyo Women's Teacher Training College Affiliated Elementary School" (東京女子師範学校附属小学校). It is affiliated with Ochanomizu University, which also hosts the affiliated kindergarten, middle and high schools on the same campus. The children enjoy a wide variety of subjects, including "Philosophy," which is the school's unique approach to learning ethics/moral education. The school also offers students the chance to participate in broader formal events, such as musical recitals and sports festivals.

Ochanomizu Elementary School's foreign language program (外国語/外国語活動) consists mainly of learning English, but the content is not limited to English, as students are encouraged to take an active interest in other languages through culture exchange events and exposure to different cultures.

3. Our experiences and tasks

In the following sections, I will describe and reflect on the internship month by month, highlighting the major events, challenges and tasks presented.

3.1 October – Getting Used To Our Surroundings

3.1.1 The First Day: Spending a Day at a Japanese Elementary School

The first day of the internship, Erian and I were not able to coordinate meeting together for our introductory experience, so we had our Day 1 experiences separately. I was invited by Ms. Hama to spend most of the school day with her class, 6-3 (6th grade, class 3), where I got to see what a day at a Japanese elementary school looks like. I was greeted warmly by Ms. Hama and one of her students at the gate, where I received a schedule of the day's classes and events, as well as instructions on where to find my locker, leave my things, and find the classrooms written on my schedule. I was nervous and shy at first, but they were very welcoming and patient, and before long I was able to find my bearings.

The schedule of my first day at the internship is as follows:

Time	Class/Event	Place
8:10-8:20	Morning homeroom (朝の会 Asa-no-Kai)	6-3 classroom
8:20-8:40	Cross-grade activities (異学年での活動 通称：たてわり集会 Tatewari-shukai)	6-3 classroom
8:45-9:25	P.E. (体育 Taiiku)	Schoolyard
9:35-10:15	Social Studies (社会 Shakai)	6-3 classroom
10:15-10:35	Recess (中休み Naka-yasumi)	6-3 classroom
10:40-11:20	Foreign Language Activities (外国語活動 Gaikokugo-katsudo)	4-1 classroom
11:30-12:10	Foreign Languages (外国語 Gaikokugo)	6-2 classroom
12:10-12:50	Lunch time (給食 Kyushoku)	6-3 classroom
12:50-13:10	Afternoon Homeroom (帰りの会 Kaeri-no-Kai)	6-3 classroom
13:20-14:20	School Committee (委員会活動 Iinkai-katsudo)	6-3 classroom

*Note: The two Foreign Language Activities sessions held between 10:40 and 12:10 were held with the classes where I would regularly be attending for the internship.

I was impressed by the children's energy and liveliness during the early hours of the morning, with many eager to sing, dance and play together. What particularly struck me was their sense of agency and independence, as many of the tasks of the day were organized and carried out entirely by

the students, under Ms. Hama’s oversight. The children were a bit shy to approach me at first, and I them, but as the day went on, we were able to make some contact and communicate.

3.1.2 Our First Classes

After Erian and I had our first day experiences, we began attending our respective and shared English classes as per the schedule below:

		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 st period	8:45-9:25				4-2 class (Daria)	
2 nd period	9:35-10:15			6-3 class (Erian)	4-3 class (Daria)	6-3 class (Daria)
3 rd period	10:40- 11:20		4-1 class (Both)	6-1 class (Erian)		
4 th period	11:30- 12:10		6-2 class (Both)			
5 th period	13:20- 14:00				6-4 class (Erian)	

We initially felt overwhelmed by the number of students, tasks and general setup of the English classes themselves, as they were quite flexibly structured, with lots of activities and drills that felt improvised to both me and Erian. Not knowing what to expect or what we would be asked to do until we came into the classroom (e.g. reading aloud, pronunciation practice, Q&As with the students) was initially a bit stressful. However, as we attended these sessions regularly, we gradually grew accustomed to the broad structure of the classes and became better at learning on the job.

3.2 November – Identifying Challenges in the Classroom

3.2.1 Classes and presentations

As the internship progressed, I noticed that much of the stress and anxiety started to fade away. This made it easier for us to not only help out in class, but also become more attuned to the children’s reactions and needs during the activities. I became comfortable enough to take the initiative to suggest ideas for some of the activities, ask questions about the school and classes, and began actively taking notes to later reflect on the day’s findings. While there are too many to list, below in points are a couple experiences that I felt especially proud of:

- During a vocabulary drilling activity, the class was very loud and rowdy. When my turn came to do the repetition, instead of repeating in a loud voice, I challenged the class to see

who could repeat the vocabulary the quietest. This helped us be able to do the vocabulary drill while managing noise levels, and the challenge itself had the added effect of being interesting for the students.

- During an interactive speaking activity, a student that had finished early was causing commotion in the back of the classroom. Instead of reprimanding her, I went over to her and started a conversation with her, which helped her calm down and focus on a quieter, 1-on-1 English speaking activity with me.

We were also tasked with creating presentations on ourselves, our home countries, and cultures. This helped us get used to speaking in front of the class while testing out whether the English we were using was adequate for the target audience and adjust it as we went along. I personally found that using big gestures, short, direct sentences and a slower speaking speed helped both the 4th and 6th graders better understand the content.

3.2.2 Cultural exchange events

As part of a separate foreign student exchange program, Erian and I were invited to join a series of cultural exchange events held at the school with the 5th grade classes. While I was not able to attend all of them due to scheduling conflicts, I enjoyed the time I spent with the children. They presented parts of Japanese culture to us and did their best to engage with us despite the language barrier. We even got a short tour of the school. I was amazed yet again at the children's sense of autonomy, responsibility, and organizational ability. I could sense their shyness and uncertainty, but as time passed, we became more able to interact.

3.3 December – Reflecting and Wrapping Up (EDI Symposium)

As the final week of our internship, as well as the EDI Symposium, where we would be presenting the results of our experience grew near, Erian and I realized we had grown tremendously throughout the three months we spent at Ochanomizu Elementary School. We came to the conclusion that in spite of the challenges we faced, we did much better than we thought we could. This helped us understand that going forwards, we should be more confident in our abilities to both handle planned and unplanned settings, especially with a language/cultural barrier.

After the Symposium, we had our final week of classes at the elementary school, where we were able to say our goodbyes to the children, staff and Ms. Hama. We received a warm farewell, and many of the students even wanted us to sign their books and papers. It was a big moment for us, and we felt extremely grateful to everyone.

4. Final Reflections

The English teaching internship at Ochanomizu Elementary School taught me many things about not just the way that education systems in Japan operate, but also about myself. In every challenge, I was able to see where I struggled most, which helped me better think about how to improve in that area. For example, I noticed that while I was comfortable with formal class activities, I struggled with one-on-one student interaction. This made me better able to tackle my problem, and work on it actively during the three months of the internship.

At the end, I would like to list a few points I learned about English education in Ochanomizu Elementary School, which I would like to think about in more depth in my studies going forwards:

- Students do not have formal English exams until middle school, which makes the English they study in elementary school more open and interactive. However, the lack of a clear goal for why learning English is valuable could affect their motivation to learn. This made me think about how important it is to find new approaches towards positive, intrinsic motivation for English learning.
- Students in the 5th and 6th grades all use tablets for the majority of their learning. While the use of ICT can greatly benefit both students and teachers, I noticed many students finding it hard to put their screens away when it was time to focus on something else. In addition, during English output activities, a number of students opted for using Google Translate instead of the provided paperback dictionaries. While leveraging technologies is a crucial skill in our modern-day world, this made me think about how important it is to be able to use analog study methods and activities as well.

5. Conclusion

Overall, I found the experience at Ochanomizu Elementary School to have been very enlightening and character-building. I hope to be able to participate in more programs that offer the chance to study English education in Japan. I am extremely grateful to everyone who accommodated Erian and I during the three months of our internship. I am hopeful that the experiences I gained here will serve as part of the cornerstone to my future language teaching endeavors, in which I strive to help students find their motivation to study languages effectively.

Our experience at the English Internship at Ochanomizu Elementary School

Contents

01

Self introduction and our goals for the internship

02

The internship: our tasks and responsibilities

03

Challenges we faced and how we overcame them

04

Reflections and summary



The internship: Ochanomizu Elementary School

- From October to December (3-month internship)
- Part of the Global Internship II curriculum
- Participate in English classes alongside students

Our schedule

● Erian ● Daria ● Erian and Daria

- Both individual and shared classes
- 4th and 6th grade classes
- Each class = 40 minutes x 5 times a week

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1st Period				4-2 class	
2nd Period			6-3 class	4-3 class	6-3 class
3rd Period		4-1 class	6-1 class		
4th Period		6-2 class			
5th Period				6-4 class	

Our tasks and responsibilities

01

Assist the teachers

Help with new vocabulary pronunciation practice and repetition.

Distribute and collect assignments in class.

02

Help the kids

Monitor classwork and games and help with exercises.

Pair up with students in games and dialogue practice.

03

Extra assignments

Make presentations about ourselves and our home countries, share our cultures.

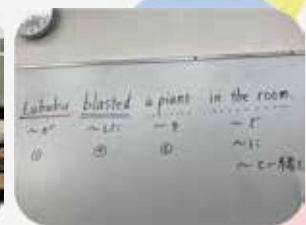
Participate in extra exchange events with other foreign students and elementary schoolers (5th grade).



Some pictures from the internship :)



Presentations



Having fun with English :)

Some pictures from the internship :)



Materials (4th grade)



Materials (6th grade)

Challenges we faced

01

Warming up to the students

02

Overcoming the language barrier

03

Adjusting to the flexible class structure

04

Getting used to the noise levels

05

Figuring out the extent of our responsibilities

How we grew during the internship



Summary

Overall, the internship was a great learning experience that we are incredibly grateful to have taken part of.

We learned a lot from the elementary students and we hope they learned from us too.

Key takeaways from the internship:

- Have more confidence in our teaching abilities
- Despite a language barrier, there are ways to still communicate.
- To try things outside of our comfort zones.

Final Report of Long Term Internship at EtonHouse International Schools Japan

A.Sato (Ochanomizu University, JAPAN)

This report reflects on the long-term internship conducted at EtonHouse International Schools Japan from October 2025 to January 2026. First, it provides an overview of EtonHouse International Schools Japan, the venue for the long-term internship, followed by a description of the internship activities. It then summarizes the challenges I encountered during the internship, how they were addressed, and the lessons learned that will be applied in the future.

1. EtonHouse International Schools Japan

EtonHouse International Schools Japan is an International School part of the EtonHouse International Education Group, with over 100 schools in 9 countries. They use an inquiry-based learning approach, inspired by global best practices seeking to nurture children's natural curiosity.

EtonHouse International Schools programs have a strong focus on bilingual competency and holistic skill development, fostering confidence, critical thinking and social skills to prepare students for success in a global environment. In Tokyo campuses are located in Roppongi and Toranomon, offering education in English and Mandarin. During summer vacation, it hosts summer camps open to external children, featuring programs emphasizing interaction with nature at locations like Madarao.

2. What We Did During Long Term Internship at EtonHouse International Schools Japan

We were assigned two projects during this long-term internship. The first was to devise ways to convey Japanese culture and etiquette to participants from diverse cultural backgrounds at the summer camp. The second was to develop a marketing strategy for the summer camp. We collaborated to tackle both projects. Below are the details of each project and our response.

i. Project 1

The theme for Project 1 was as follows: To research and develop improved communication strategies for our international Summer Camp parents, ensuring better understanding of Japanese cultural norms and guidelines. This aimed to address issues such as unread handbooks, misuse of facilities (toilets), littering, and unauthorized parking, which stem from cultural differences.

To address these issues, we first researched cultural differences. We investigated the nationalities of the children and parents participating in the summer camp and researched

the cultures and manners of those countries. We then clarified Japanese culture and manners, particularly points to be mindful of at summer camp, what differs from their cultures, and what needed to be communicated to them. For example, while flushing used toilet paper down the toilet is common in Japan, it is standard practice in China, Taiwan, Thailand, and the Philippines to dispose of it in a trash bin. Therefore, we had to clearly communicate the proper method for handling used toilet paper to them. Furthermore, since waste separation is virtually nonexistent in Thailand, this practice also needed to be explained. After clarifying the key messages to convey from this research, we created posters and videos for implementation. For the posters, we kept the language concise and used large illustrations to ensure the content was understandable regardless of nationality or age. The video's advantage lies in being easier to watch than reading text, so we designed it to effectively convey the necessary information in just over a minute—keeping it short to preserve this convenience. These materials were designed for practical use and we received constructive feedback from staff. For example, they said that videos created to explain rules and etiquette could be attached to reminder emails with added information about required items and meeting times.

ii. Project 2

The theme for Project 2 was as follows: To research potential markets and develop an effective digital marketing strategy to attract future Summer Program participants from new and existing international regions.

The approach to this project was divided into three steps: research, analysis, and synthesis. First came the research necessary for analysis. We investigated the populations of countries and regions, along with their accessibility to Japan. Based on this, we determined Malaysia and Indonesia to be suitable markets and conducted more detailed research on those two countries. We investigated the locations and concepts of international schools, the duration of their summer vacations, tuition fees, and other details. We also researched information such as the dates, scale, and participation fees for fairs promoting private schools. Next, based on this gathered information, we proceeded with analysis and comparison. For the international school data, we analyzed whether the school's concept aligned with EtonHouse's summer camp concept, the financial feasibility of participating in the summer camp based on estimated tuition costs, and whether the summer vacation period overlapped with the summer camp schedule. This helped us determine which international schools to target for promotion. For the school fair information, we analyzed the fair's scale, target audience, compatibility with the summer camp's concept, and the potential benefits of participating. Finally, we compiled all this analysis into a spreadsheet and PowerPoint

presentation to ensure clarity during the proposal.

Based on the above research, we considered collaborating with British School Jakarta in Indonesia, Green School Bali, Wynnkids Preschool in Malaysia, and other Eton International Schools. We proposed distributing flyers and creating joint posts on social media, particularly Instagram, to increase awareness. In cases of collaboration, we believed it was necessary to present benefits not only for ourselves but also for the other party. Therefore, we created a brochure titled “Collaboration Proposal” and designed it to make the partner school eager to accept the collaboration. We also considered participating in school fairs such as the Private School Fair and Malaysia's Private & International Schools Expo (commonly known as MYPiSE) for marketing purposes.

3. Difficulties and Solutions

In undertaking these two projects, I faced two major challenges. The first was re-examining what I took for granted, and the second was my lack of marketing knowledge and experience.

First, Project 1 involved conveying Japanese culture and manners to people from diverse cultural backgrounds. For me, this required understanding what exactly needed to be communicated, what their prior knowledge encompassed versus what they didn't know, and how their everyday assumptions differed from ours. Having been born and raised in Japan, I needed to understand the specific points where people born and raised in different cultural spheres tend to stumble when adapting to Japanese culture and manners. What proved invaluable here was leveraging AI and my past international experience. We used AI to research and compile differences in culture and etiquette between Japan and other countries, as well as to identify stumbling blocks for people from different cultural backgrounds. AI could instantly synthesize vast amounts of information available online, proving extremely helpful. I was also able to draw on my own study abroad experience and interactions with international students. Having studied in the UK last year, reflecting on what challenges I faced, what support I needed, and what proved helpful greatly accelerated the research and material creation for this project.

Another challenge was that I lacked marketing experience and knowledge for Project 2. My university major was education, and I had never studied business or commerce. Developing marketing strategies without that background proved extremely difficult. Particularly challenging was that this project involved overseas marketing in Indonesia and Malaysia, not Japan. This required understanding international trends and consumer cultures, which was demanding. The solutions to this challenge were relying on staff with marketing experience and leveraging AI. EtonHouse had staff with marketing knowledge, so we were able to refine our strategy by getting weekly feedback from them on what information to research, what strategies to consider, and how to improve our proposals. Furthermore, since developing marketing strategies from scratch

and gathering information is neither easy nor quick, we utilized AI to handle information gathering and idea generation.

4. What I Learned Through the Internship

Through this internship, I learned three things: business skills, the challenges of online work, and the importance of collaborating with others. Before starting this internship, I had little experience with business-related work, as my academic background is mainly in education. At first, I was unfamiliar with tasks such as marketing research and strategy development. However, through this long-term internship, I was able to gradually become more comfortable working in these new areas. The extended duration allowed me to learn step by step, reflect on feedback, and improve my approaches over time. Compared to short-term internships, this experience provided more opportunities to apply what I learned and to better understand how my skills could be used in a professional setting.

In terms of business skills, I learned how to utilize AI and how to organize and present information. In both projects during this internship, information gathering was extremely important and time-consuming. In this context, I believe how effectively we utilized AI directly impacted both time savings and the volume of information we could handle. I learned practical ways to use AI in business settings, such as not taking AI-generated information at face value but thoroughly verifying facts, and how to ask AI questions to obtain the specific information I needed. Additionally, we learned how to organize and present the information we researched and our own proposals in a way that is easily understood by others in a business setting. Initially, we compiled our research findings in a Google Doc, but the content was only comprehensible to us and not effectively communicated to others. Based on feedback from EtonHouse staff, we learned how to create materials that effectively convey information. This included organizing data into tables within spreadsheets and making our PowerPoint presentations more visually clear and understandable. Learning from the EtonHouse staff's previously created spreadsheet, which had its information organized in a highly clear and practical way, was an especially valuable experience.

Next is the challenge of online work. During this internship, I spent most of my time working online. The biggest issue was the difficulty in communicating. While we used Google Chat and could share information to some extent, asking small questions or building relationships presented hurdles. As a result, my buddy Camille and I decided to meet offline every week to advance our activities together. This experience became a valuable lesson in truly understanding the difficulties of working online.

Finally, in business, it's crucial to collaborate with others, including your buddy and staff. During this internship, whenever I encountered something, I didn't understand or faced a problem,

I was able to resolve it through communication. Especially with my buddy, we leveraged each other's strengths, utilizing our individual expertise while compensating for each other's weaknesses. This cooperation allowed us to advance the project smoothly. I realized that working alone isn't possible. When knowledge, experience, and strengths differ, rather than viewing this as a negative, it's crucial to see it as a positive opportunity to support each other and engage in activities that leverage everyone's strengths.

Overall, this internship provided an invaluable opportunity to gain essential skills for the workplace while still in college. Many experiences were unique to EtonHouse, a globally operating company—such as an environment where English was used constantly, both internally and externally, including international marketing strategies, and cross-cultural communication—, which provided experiences rarely found in internships at Japanese companies. I intend to apply what I learned and experienced here not only to my future studies but also when I enter the workforce.



Internship Experience at EtonHouse International School




Today's Agenda

01 Introduction About the company	02 Experience What did we do during the 10 weeks?
03 Reflection What did we learn through the internship?	04 Outcomes Putting it all together

01 Introduction

EtonHouse International School

Etonhouse is an International School part of the Etonhouse International Education Group, with over 100 schools in 9 countries.
 ...

02 The Internship Experience

The Task

Project 1 Inclusive Communication Enhancements for Summer Camps
Project 2 Global Marketing Strategy for Future Summer Camps

Our Proposals

Project 1

We made

- Poster
- Video
- Hand Book

to make it easier to understand Japanese culture and rules regardless of nationality or age

Project 2
Global Marketing Strategy for Future Summer Camps

03 Reflection

Our Reflection

Challenges

- Venus has a beautiful name and is the second planet from the Sun. It's terribly hot—even hotter than Mercury

Thoughts

Challenges

- Not a marketing major

Thoughts

04

Outcomes

Our internship provided us with...



Knowledge

About the global education industry and markets



Practical Experience

Research, Proposal Development, Content Creation

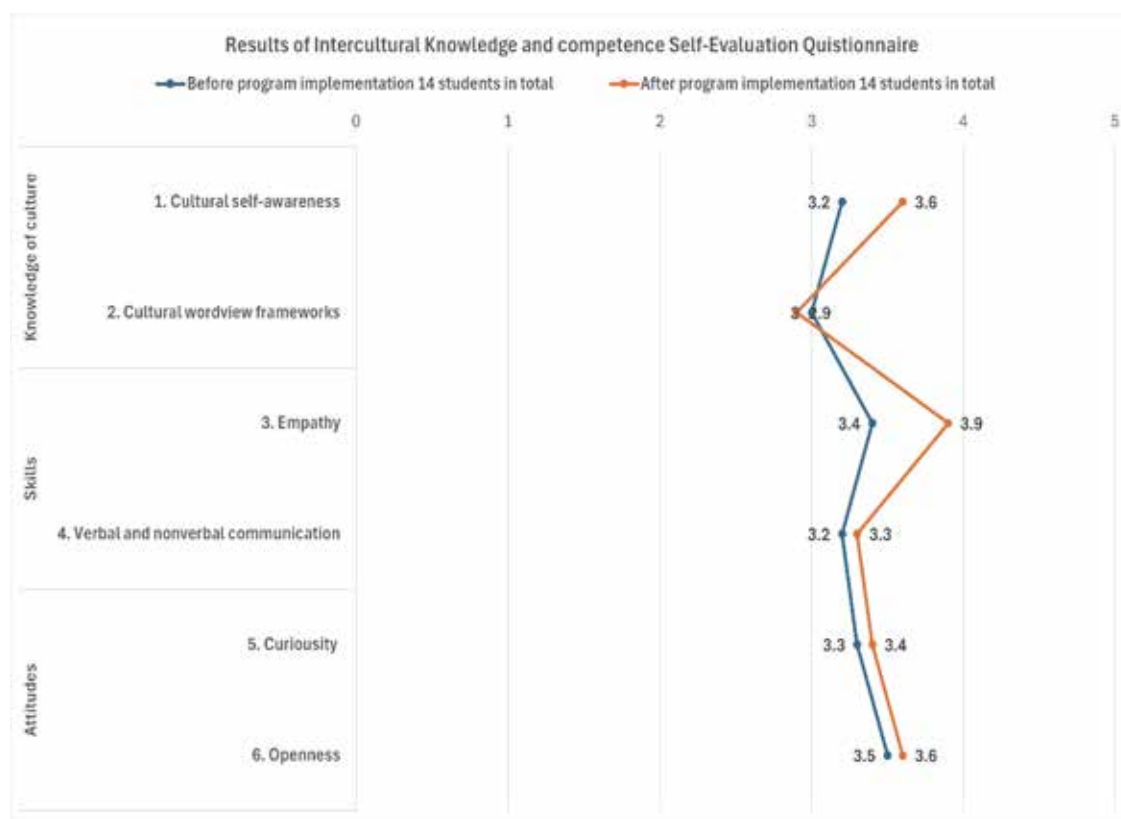


Teamwork & Collaboration

Working together for 10 weeks

Self-Evaluation Questionnaire about Intercultural Knowledge and Competence (VALUE rubric): Before and After the EDI Program

14 students in total (6 Japanese students of Ochanomizu Univ. and 8 international students who participated in the EDI program as the third-term students)

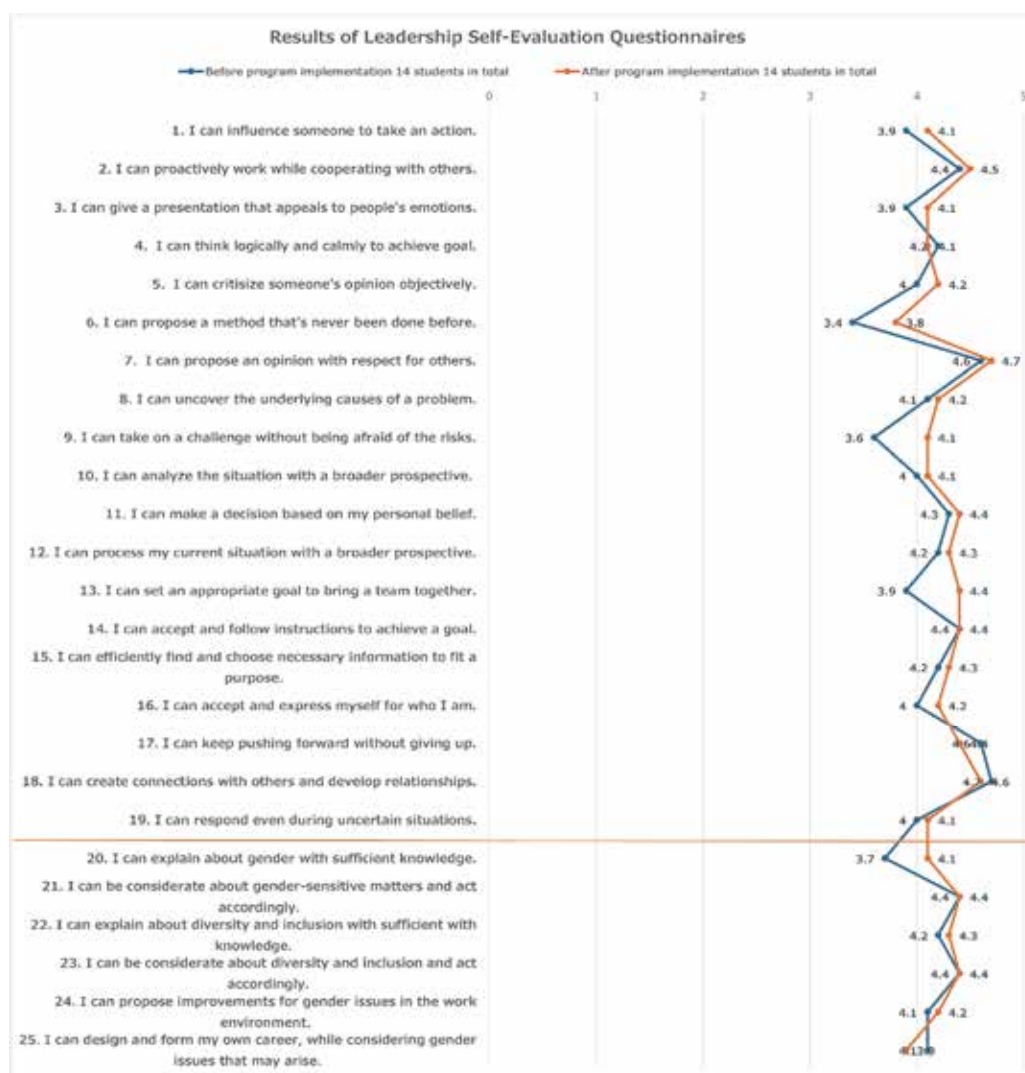


Tallying the results of the self-assessment questionnaires related to the VALUE rubric of intercultural understanding conducted before and after the EDI program, then plotting those results on a line graph revealed a 0.2-point increase in the average value after the completion of the program. In particular, there was an increase of over 0.5 points in the average value of the question regarding “Empathy” compared to prior to the program. We believe this indicates ability to understand the feelings and differences of people from cultures distinct from one's own, accept others as they are, and engage positively. Additionally, the average self-assessment score for “Cultural Self-awareness” rose by 0.4 points compared to before the program. Through this program, participating students engaged in the same schedule alongside peers from diverse cultural backgrounds. This experience provided opportunities to acknowledge mutual differences and reflect on themselves. Interacting with others different from themselves likely prompted participants to reexamine their understanding of their own culture and their sense of self.

		Average		Difference
		Before	After	
Overall		3.3	3.5	0.2
Detail	Knowledge of culture (Q1,Q2)	3.1	3.3	0.2
	Skills (Q3,Q4)	3.3	3.6	0.3
	Attitudes (Q5,Q6)	3.4	3.5	0.1

Self-Evaluation Questionnaire about Leadership: Before and After the EDI Program

14 students in total (6 Japanese students of Ochanomizu Univ. and 8 international students who participated in the EDI program as the third-term students)



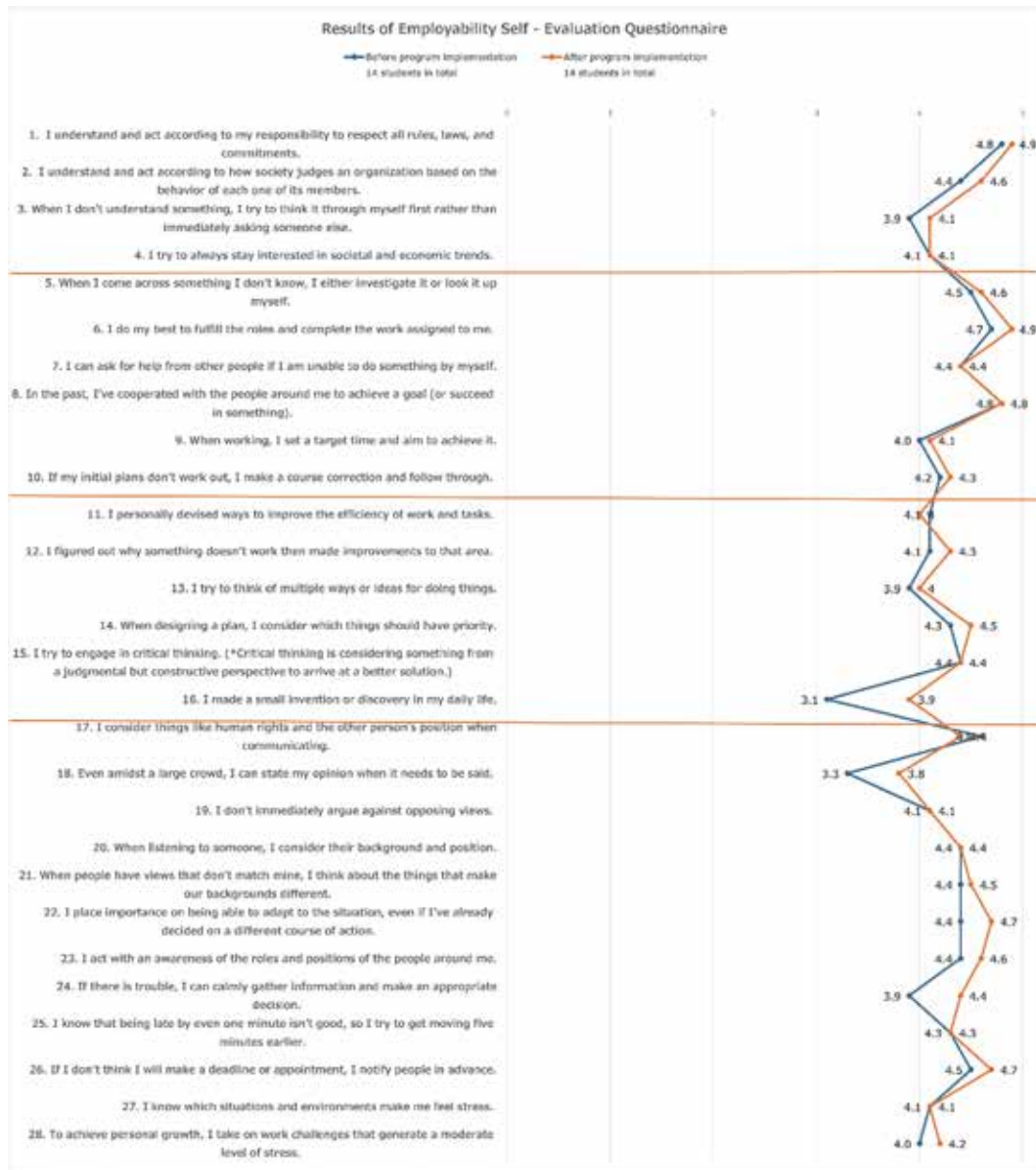
Calculating the average value of the 25-question leadership self-assessments conducted before and after the EDI program and plotting that data on a line graph showed that the value increased by 0.2 points compared to before the program. The statements [9. I can take on a challenge without being afraid of the risks.] and [13. I can set an appropriate goal to bring a team together.] experienced especially high growth of over 0.5 points. These two statements are be essential for the demonstration

of leadership in general, and the results here suggest that participating in the EDI program is thought to have contributed to a more positive attitude toward challenges and increased confidence in building cooperative relationships with others. Additionally, item [20. I can explain about gender with sufficient knowledge.] showed a 0.4-point increase from the pre-program average. This item, unique to Ochanomizu university's evaluation framework, relates to gender. It suggests that through the EDI program, participating students' interest in, awareness of, and knowledge about gender increased.

		Before	After	Difference
Overall (25 questions)		4.1	4.3	0.2
Detail	Questions related to leadership in general (Q 1~Q19)	4.1	4.3	0.2
	Questions related to gender, diversity, inclusion, and/or career development(Q20~Q25)	4.2	4.2	0

Self-Evaluation Questionnaire about Employability: Before and After the EDI Program

14 students in total (6 Students of Ochanomizu Univ. and 8 international students) who participated in the Global Internship Program in 2025)



Tallying the results of the 28 question items for each participating student and computing the average values of the employability self-assessment questionnaire before and after the EDI program, we plotted them on a line graph. Comparing the average values before and after the program revealed

a 0.2-point increase on the later survey.

In particular, the average self-assessment score for question [16. I made a small invention or discovery in my daily life.] increased by 0.8 points compared to before the internship, showing the largest improvement. Additionally, the average self-evaluation scores for Item [18. Even amidst a large crowd, I can state my opinion when it needs to be said.] and [24. If there is trouble, I can calmly gather information and make an appropriate decision.] which demonstrated increase of 0.5 points each. Both items fall under the “Teamwork Ability” category of Working Adult Skills, and the results of the questionnaire tell us that students in the EDI program interacted closely with each other.

Accordingly, it is considered that the EDI program enhanced the ability to cooperate while respecting the opinions of others who differ from oneself. This improvement stemmed from international students and Ocha University students forming a single team at the host company and working collaboratively toward a shared goal.

		Average		Difference
		Before	After	
Overall (28 questions)		4.2	4.4	0.2
Detail	Professional awareness (Q1-4)	4.3	4.4	0.1
	The ability to keep advancing without giving up in the face of failure (Taking action) (Q5-10)	4.4	4.5	0.1
	The ability to question things and consider them thoroughly (thinking things through) (Q11-16)	4	4.2	0.2
	The ability to work together with a diverse group of people to achieve goals (Teamwork) (Q17-28)	4.2	4.4	0.2

EDI Program for Global Leaders

In 2022, Ochanomizu University was selected by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) for its “Inter-University Exchange Project” and launched the EDI Program for Global Leaders. This program fosters global leaders with EDI through six months of studying in Japan from a partner university in the UK, Australia, Canada, or the U.S. as well as an internship in English.

※ Refer to https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/kaikaku/sekaitenkai/

Ochanomizu University

Center for International Education
EDI Project Office



Student Service Building 3F
2-1-1 Otsuka, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-8610
E-mail: ocha-edi@cc.ocha.ac.jp