

長野賞論文

The Pilot Refugee Resettlement Program in Japan: What Is Needed for the Successful Integration of Resettled Refugees?

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要旨：

2010年より日本政府は難民キャンプから5年間30人ずつミャンマー難民を受け入れる第三国定住難民プログラムを開始。しかし、このプログラムは社会統合など様々な問題に直面している。本論文は日本における第三国定住難民の地域社会統合には何が必要かを難民と支援員のインタビューを中心に調査したものである。本研究では、日本の社会統合において重要な8つの要素を明らかにし、第三国定住難民の今後の効果的支援の策定に寄与する。

キーワード： 第三国定住難民、社会統合、質的研究

Keywords : The pilot refugee resettlement program in Japan, Successful Integration, Qualitative Research

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In 2010, the Japanese government launched a five-year resettlement program¹ to accept 30 Myanmar² refugees each year from a Myanmar refugee camp in Thailand (Cabinet Secretariat, 2013). Since Japan has long been internationally noted as a country reluctant to accept refugees, this decision pleasantly surprised the international community.

The first group of resettlement refugees, five families comprising 27 Karen refugees, arrived in September and October 2010. The second group, four families comprising 18 Karen refugees, arrived on October 29, 2011 (Cabinet Secretariat, 2013).

The first group of resettled refugees participated in a 180-day Settlement Support Program, organized by the Refugee Assistance Headquarters (RHQ) in Tokyo. The refugees completed the program in March 2011, and then two families consisting of 12 refugees moved to Togane-shi, Chiba prefecture, where the parents began working on a leafy vegetable farm. The other three families, 15 refugees, settled in Suzuka-shi, Mie prefecture, and work on a mushroom farm (Cabinet Secretariat, 2013).

The second group of resettled refugees completed the Settlement Support Program on March 2, 2012, and all four families moved to Misato-shi, Saitama prefecture. The husbands from all four families began working at a shoe-making factory in Tokyo, while the wives work for a linen supply service. Local government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide support, such as Japanese language classes for the families (Cabinet Secretariat, 2013).

However, a year after the first group moved to Chiba, they faced difficulties integrating into their new lives. The adults quit their jobs at

the leafy vegetable farm citing low salary and harsh working conditions (Nakagawa & Furuta, 2011). Other than their jobs, they complained about an insufficient integration support system and anxiety about their futures, especially their children's futures (Watanebe, 2011). They felt insecure because they sensed gaps between what they had heard about Japan and the Japanese resettlement program and their actual experience (Nakagawa & Furuta, 2011). After quitting leafy vegetable farming, the families moved to Tokyo. Both the husband and wife from one family obtained jobs there, while only the husband from the other family is working (Fujisaki, 2012a).

In the third year of the pilot program (2012), three families comprising 16 refugees participated in a pre-departure orientation program. However, all of them declined resettlement in Japan, citing insecurity about life there (Fruta, 2012). As the fourth group, four families comprising 18 refugees, and as the fifth group, five families comprising 23 refugees came to Japan. In addition, the Japanese government has decided to continue the program to accept 30 Myanmar refugees every year, from Malaysia. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2014).

As the conditions described above indicate, refugees face difficulties with social integration under the Japanese resettlement program. This paper aims to improve the current resettlement program by examining the reasons behind these difficulties and suggesting solutions on the basis of perspectives of the refugees and their support providers.

At the present time, this study is the only study that focuses on the perspective of the resettled refugees, both the first and second groups, as well as of their service providers through interviews and participant observations. This reveals an anthropological macro

perspective that is necessary to improve the integration support system for resettled refugees in Japan.

Section 2: Purpose and Hypothesis

This study primarily determines the requirements for the social integration of the resettled refugees in local communities within Japan.

There appear to be significant differences between the support provided to the two families of the first group in Tokyo and the second group in Misato, which cause the gap in the degree of social integration. This paper investigates the causes of these differences. To examine this hypothesis, the analysis must consider the perspectives of the resettlement refugees and their support providers. In addition, examining this hypothesis might lead to findings

that enable the improvement of Japan's support system for the resettlement program.

Section 3: Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research method based on personal interviews and literature reviews.

The author interviewed the resettled refugees in Tokyo and Misato, researchers, NGO workers, Japanese teachers, and other Myanmar refugees. In addition, the author participated in a Japanese language program with the second group of resettled refugees and tutored a high school student living in Tokyo. A majority of the interviews were conducted from November 2012 to March 2013. A list of the main interviewees is displayed in Tables 1 and 2:

Table 1. Resettled refugees

	Year arrived	Residence	No. of children	Other information (as of March 2013)
Family A	2011 (second group)	Misato	3	Only family that lives in a different building than others in the Misato apartment complex. The oldest among the second group. The oldest child from the family is a fifth grader; she is also the oldest child in the second group.
Family B	2011 (second group)	Misato	2	The husband is the most fluent in Japanese in the second group.
Family C	2011 (second group)	Misato	4	The husband is facing difficulties with his work. Two children attend an elementary school, and the other two attend a nursery school.
Family D	2011 (second group)	Misato	1	The youngest family in the second group. The wife recently quit her job.
Family E	2010 (first group)	Tokyo	3	Moved from Chiba to Tokyo in September 2011. The husband works as a mover, and the wife works at a cleaning factory. The oldest child (whom the author tutored for one month) is in the final year of junior high school.
Family F	2010 (first group)	Tokyo	5	Moved from Chiba to Tokyo in September 2011. The husband works for a construction company, and the wife gave a birth to a girl last November. The family receives public assistance.

Table 2. Support providers

	Sex	Position
City officer A	Female	A city officer in Misato who organizes the Japanese language teaching program for resettled refugees.
City officer B	Male	A city officer in Misato who organizes the Japanese language teaching program for resettled refugees.
Volunteer A	Male	The leader of the Misato International Association. He organizes the support for the second group.
Volunteer B	Male	A member of the Misato International Association who has participated in the Japanese language program since October.
Volunteer C	Female	Not a member of the association, but participates in another language teaching group in Misato. She has been involved in support for resettlement refugees from the initial stages.
Volunteer D	Female	A member of the association who is also involved in support for the resettlement group from the initial stages.
Volunteer F	Female	A member of the association who often cares for the refugees' children during the program.
AJALT A	Female	A veteran Japanese language teacher with over 20 years of experience in teaching Japanese to refugees. She is involved in the six-month Settlement Support Program for both the first and second groups of resettlement refugees.
AJALT B	Female	A Japanese language teacher who taught the second group of refugees.

The author visited Myanmar refugee camps in Thailand (Mae La and Umpiem Mai camps) in August 2011 and interviewed Japanese NGO workers in the camps and Myanmar refugees.

Further, reviewing the “Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration” by UNHCR as well as literature related to social integration is an important part of this thesis.

Section 4: Theoretical Framework

To examine the research questions, the author selected “social integration” as the theoretical framework. This paper especially focuses on Ager and Strang’s (2004) “Indicators of Integration” to avoid a discussion regarding the

length of the refugees’ stay in Japan as well as to establish a common understanding and clear evaluation of integration. The Indicator of Integration enables researchers and policy makers to have a common understanding as well as to assist them with the planning and evaluation of services for refugees (Ager & Strang, 2004). The indicator is especially useful when comparing the first and second groups of resettlement refugees in Japan, because there is a one-year gap between them.

According to Ager and Strang, there are ten domains grouped under four headings in the Indicator of Integrations Framework, as shown in the chart below (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 3).

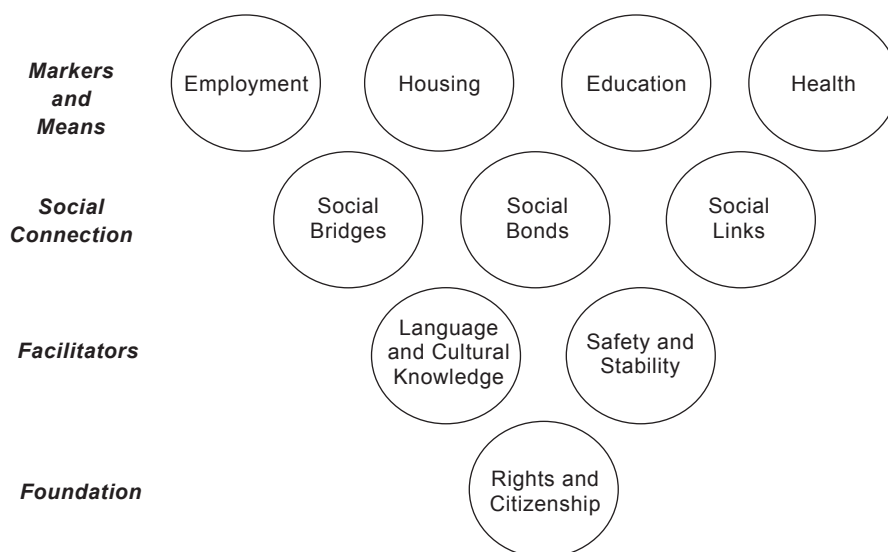


Figure 1: The Indicators of Integration Framework <Source: Ager and Strang, 2004, p.3>

“Means and markers” contains four domains: “Employment,” “Housing,” “Education,” and “Health.” These represent major areas of attainment that are widely recognized as critical factors in the integration process and can be considered the “public face” of integration (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 3). They clearly serve as potential means to support integration (Ager & Strang, 2008, p. 169).

“Social connections” stresses the importance of relationships to the understanding of the integration process (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 3). It consists of “Social bridges” between members of other communities, such as the relationship between refugees and their host communities; “Social bonds,” which are connections within a community, such as co-ethnic or co-religious bonds; and “Social links,” which comprise links with the structure of the state, for instance, government services (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 4; Ager & Strang, 2008, pp. 178-181).

There are two domains within “Facilitators,”

which are crucial in the integration process. They are “Language and cultural knowledge” and “Safety and stability” (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 4).

“Rights and citizenships” is the only domain within “Foundation.” It represents the basis upon which expectations and obligations for integration are established (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 4).

All the domains are interrelated, and each domain may influence the others. In addition, the domains do not exhibit a clear “process” of integration (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 4), nor do they suggest a hierarchy of their relative importance (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 12). Moreover, domains and categories can be independently chosen depending on the focus and conditions of each study (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 10).

Chapter 2: Provided Support

This chapter explains how the Japanese government organizes the support program for

resettled refugees.

A pre-departure program is organized for the resettled refugees in the Mae La camp. The program introduces Japanese lifestyle, culture, and language. It is administrated by IOM and implemented by AJALT.³

After the refugees arrive in Japan, the half-year resettlement program begins. During the program, all the refugees live in one apartment in Tokyo, with one room for each family, provided by the Japanese government. The program consists of approximately 430 hours of Japanese language trainings and 90 hours of guidance on Japanese life and vocational support programs (RHQ). The program facilitates refugees' integration into Japanese society and self-sustainable living in Japan (MOFA, 2012b).

After the half-year program, the refugees move to a place where they make their own living. For six months after moving from Tokyo, local integration support is provided, primarily by RHQ.

Chapter 3: Research Findings

This chapter examines the social integration of the resettled refugees using the indicators proposed by Ager and Strang.

Section 1: Means and Markers

Employment

-Misato

Four husbands in Misato work at a shoe-making factory in Tokyo. They work six days a week, and on most days, they leave their houses at 6 am and return at approximately 9 pm. During the busy season, they work until midnight. It takes one and a half hours for them to commute to work by train from Misato Station.

Although all four husbands stated, "The work is hard and difficult," they also expressed positive feelings about the job, especially with

regard to their coworkers and bosses as well as being employed, and they demonstrated high motivation for their job during the interview. Their comments also show contentment with the freedom to choose their jobs

The wives of three families work at a linen-cleaning factory in Misato. They work in shifts, and they work almost all Sundays, even though that is the only day off for their husbands. Some of the husbands express their disappointment to have less time to spend with their family, while they spent most of the time together when they were in the camp.

According to the husbands, all their wives face difficulties in working because they have never worked before. The wife from Family D also worked with them, but she quit her job at the end of 2012 because it was too difficult to maintain both the job and the household.

-Tokyo

The two husbands living in Tokyo are also employed. The husband from Family E works for a moving company, and the husband from Family F works for a wrecking company. The husband from Family E commented, "It is not really difficult because I work only about three hours a day." The husband from Family E works five days a week and has most weekends off. The husband from Family F works more, occasionally even on Sundays.

Of the two wives in Tokyo, the wife from Family E works with the wives in Misato. She noted, "Working is hard. I don't feel like doing anything on my day off." The wife from Family F does not work because she gave birth last November. Accordingly, Family F receives public assistance because of their low income.

All the husbands are employed and indicated satisfaction with their jobs during the interviews. The husbands' comments exemplify

their contentment with their employment and with the freedom to choose their jobs. In addition, four wives among the six are employed. The wives struggle more than their husbands because they have not worked previously, and they must maintain both their job and the household. Except in Family F, all the wives earn income.

While the Japanese selection criteria prefer those “who would be able to earn their own living,” Family F receives public assistance because of their low income. From the Japanese government’s perspective, this is a barrier to their social integration.

In addition, a relevant source⁴ informed the author that all the husbands in Misato quit their jobs in May 2013. As in the case of the refugees in Tokyo, who previously lived in Chiba and who quit their jobs at the leafy vegetable farm because of the difficult working conditions, the work ethics of Myanmar refugees from the camps may differ from those of mainstream Japanese society. The refugees find it difficult to adapt to the Japanese working culture, which takes working hard and long for granted, as they were not allowed to work for long periods of time in the camps.

Housing

-Misato

The four families in Misato live in Misato Danchi (Misato apartment complex). Each apartment has two rooms, in addition to a kitchen and dining room. Three families live in the same building, but Family A lives in a different building because there was no vacancy in the same building. The husband from Family A commented, “I feel sad about being a little away from the other families, because they are like my own family.”

While the families are satisfied with their

housing in terms of the size and condition of the rooms, the parents as well as the children are having a stressful time adapting to Japanese cultural and situational differences, such as the difference in housing. They received requests from the residents beneath their room to prevent their children from running or jumping in the apartment. In addition, the wives faced difficulties in learning local rules, such as those regarding garbage disposal. Moreover, when the refugees moved into the apartments, their neighbors were not informed that resettled refugees were moving in.

-Tokyo

The situation of the two families in Tokyo is different. Both the families live in an apartment with two rooms, but both complain about the size. In particular, the oldest child from Family E expressed dissatisfaction with his living condition, especially lack of his private room.

The children from Family F also complained about the size of their apartment room.

The families differ in their satisfaction with their housing situations, particularly with regard to size. The refugees in Misato were satisfied with the size of their residence, while those in Tokyo complained about the size of their room. In addition, the refugees in Misato enjoyed their proximity to the other resettled refugees. This also facilitates local integration, because it enables mutual assistance among the refugees.

Education

Education is especially important for the resettled refugees in Japan as they undergo social integration. Both children and parents of refugees express their expectations for better education, which they hard to have a

chance while they are in the camps, during the interviews. These statements also show the refugees' desire and their joy at being able to receive better education.

-Misato

All the school-aged children attend school, and the younger children attend nursery school. All the parents in Misato were grateful for this situation.

There are five school-age children between the first and fifth grades among the Misato refugees. Their elementary school provides extra classes, which teach Japanese and lessons that are supplementary to the primary subjects.

The parents of the four families in Misato have been taking Japanese lessons conducted by volunteers from the local community. The city collaborated with AJALT to provide professional Japanese language lectures for the refugees. AJALT B, who has been teaching the second group of resettlement refugees since the initial six-month program, noted that their Japanese is improving. However, the lectures are conducted on Sunday, which is usually not a holiday for the wives. Thus, the wives have fewer opportunities to study Japanese.

-Tokyo

The two children from Family E attend extra classes. The oldest child attends extra classes at school, as it provides Japanese language lessons for the first year and supplementary support for primary subjects in the second year. The second oldest child from Family E, who is in the fifth grade, attends Japanese language lessons conducted by a local community volunteer group.

The parents from the two families in Tokyo, on the other hand, have not received Japanese language support since they completed

the initial six-month program. AJALT B, who helps with the Japanese improvement tests that occur approximately every two months, observed that, unlike the parents in Misato, the Japanese of the parents in Tokyo has not significantly improved.

-Common problems

Despite the efforts of the schools, there exist problems related to education for the refugee children.

A serious problem is the children's pre-program level of education. The education in the camp considerably differs from that in Japan. According to AJALT A, education in the camp focuses on language, especially on speaking.

The junior high school student from Family E appears to be doing well at school. He showed the author his report card, which indicates that his school work is highly evaluated. However, the level is not sufficient for the Japanese high school entrance exams. Despite his hard work and support from the school and volunteer groups, he failed the entrance exam of his preferred high school, which requires only a basic understanding of junior high school Japanese.

Another important problem is, the children's ages. The oldest child from Family E began his junior year of junior high school at age 17. This exceptional measure was taken considering the level of education he received in the camp. The same measure was taken for the oldest child from Family A. Although she was at the age of a typical sixth grader, the school assigned her to the fifth grade. This special care is important because it provides extra time for the students to reaffirm previously learned matter before moving to higher education. However, it also makes integration into their school classes more difficult. In Japanese culture, age is often

a factor in making friends, especially for adolescents.

Also the high cost of education presents a problem. The refugees' parents worry about the cost of their children's education.

Education is the key factor in social integration, especially for the resettled refugees in Japan. One of their primary reasons for participating in Japan's resettlement program is better education for their children.

The importance of special care for resettled children is also discussed in UNHCR's handbook for a successful resettlement program (UNHCR, 2010a, pp. 259-276). It explains that most refugee children and youngsters need intensive and targeted support to assist them in adjusting to the new school system and to redress the effects of disrupted education as well as intellectual and development delay (UNHCR, 2010a, p. 266).

All the parents showed satisfaction with the situation of their children's education. Nevertheless, the children have highlighted several problems: the large gap between the level of education in Japan and that in the camp, the placement of some children in grades not matching with their age and the high cost of education in Japan.

Health

-Misato

No one from the second group of resettlement refugees reported health problems. Support providers from the local community assist them with hospital visits when required.

-Tokyo

With help from Japan Association for Refugees (JAR) Family F has access to health services. JAR especially helped when the wife from Family F required access to health services

when she was pregnant.

The wife from Family E has been suffering from headaches induced by glaucoma. She asked JAR to take her a hospital but they have never did.

In fact, on the day I interviewed her, she independently found an interpreter to take her to a hospital. The oldest child from Family E mentioned that other Karen refugees occasionally help them with hospital visits.

Most of the resettled refugees do not have health problems and have access to health services, except the wife from Family E, who faced difficulties in accessing health services owing to the lack of support.

Section 2: Social Connection

Social bonds

Social bonds are the connections within a community that are defined by, for example, ethnic, national, or religious identity (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 4). Without this sense of identification with a particular ethnic, religious, or geographical community, integration risks becoming assimilation. This domain assesses the bonds that support the sense of belonging (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 19).

All the resettled refugees have connections with other Karen refugees and other ethnic groups of Myanmar refugees. They are invited to every event held by Karen refugee communities, such as New Year events and Karen festivals. Further, the resettlement refugees exchange phone numbers with other Karen refugees and consult them when in need of assistance. The oldest child from Family E mentioned that his mother often calls the vice-chairperson of the Karen National League in Japan when she needs help.

-Misato

In addition to the connections with Myanmar refugees in Japan, wives in Misato have strong connections with each other. They spend most of their time together; go to work together; and after they finish, pick up their children from nursery school. They help each other and share information about what they need for daily life in Japan, such as what their children need for elementary school. However, their togetherness is a concern, as it results in fewer opportunities to interact with Japanese mothers.

-Tokyo

Connections among the resettled refugees were observed during the research. Especially, the refugee families living in Tokyo frequently visit each other. The second child from Family E said that she visits the other family in Tokyo almost every weekend. In addition, the two families occasionally visit Misato, and vice versa.

The oldest child from Family E engages in religious worship and attends church almost every Sunday. He has thus formed many connections within a Christianity community, which has helped him learn the Japanese language and culture.

Furthermore, the refugees in Tokyo maintain frequent contact with Myanmar refugees other than the resettled refugees. A Myanmar refugee woman, who has been in Japan for about 20 years, helped the husbands from Families E and F find jobs and apartments when they moved from Chiba.

All the refugees interact with the Myanmar refugee community in Japan; these interactions contribute toward their social integration into Japanese society. In addition, the resettled refugees, especially the wives in Misato, have strong connections with each other; this may

impede social integration. Further, religious worship increases the level of integration for the oldest child from Family E.

Social bridges

The depth of involvement with the host community widely differs between the refugees in Tokyo and Misato, and it significantly affects the social integration of the resettled refugees.

-Misato

The refugees in Misato have strong connections with the local community. Support providers in Misato continue to support the refugees even after the government's initial six-month support period.

Support providers in Misato have a strong support system, which has developed over its long history as an international city. Misato has a large number of foreign residents, especially inside the Misato residence complex, where the population of 17,259 people includes 5% foreigners, primarily from East or Southeast Asia⁵ (City of Misato, 2012).

According to an officer of the city of Misato, Volunteer A, a board member of the Misato International Association, volunteered to support the resettled refugees after he learned that they needed support.⁶ From June 2012, three months after the refugees moved to Misato, the official Japanese language and living support have been offered every Sunday, owing to the budget provided by MOFA. More than five support providers, who have been teaching Japanese languages in the Misato residence complex, participate in each session. Moreover, some of them take care of the refugees' children by reading picture books, playing, and helping with the homework of the elementary school students. Another four support providers conduct Japanese language lessons for the

parents.⁷ They often visit the refugees' rooms to ensure that they are not inconvenienced by their commute to class. However, this support program ended in September 2012.

After the government support program ended, the support providers voluntarily provided support to the refugees every alternate Sunday. Thus, the active involvement of the local community appears to be very effective. The refugees have learned not only general information about Japan but also local information and rules from the support providers. The support providers, who are mostly women with families, possess abundant information regarding local life, such as where to shop, local rules, and information about schools.

However, while teaching Japanese to the refugees, the support providers realized that more professional lessons were required because they felt that teaching Myanmar refugees is more difficult than other foreigners. Therefore, they asked the city hall of Misato.

The city hall of Misato accepted the request. The municipality requested the central government to expand the budget, and Japanese language support resumed from October 15 with the cooperation of AJALT. City officer A said that the program was included in the budget for the "Japanese Language Education Program for 'Foreigners as Residents in Japan'" of the Agency for Cultural Affairs. The program was announced to the general public in response to the volunteers' opinions that the refugees need to communicate with a wider range of people. The participants primarily consist of Japanese language teaching volunteers in Misato, but also include some non-experienced Japanese teaching volunteers.⁸

The positive participation of the refugees was also observed. Most refugees participate in AJALT's Japanese program, held from October

to March, as long as their work schedule allows it. They talk to the support providers, even after classes end, and ask many questions during and after the classes.

A mutual intimacy is developing between the support providers and refugees. The husband from Family D stated, "They [the volunteers] are like mothers in Japan. They care about me and my family and help us a lot." The trust in Volunteer A is especially remarkable; he plays a central role in the support in Misato.

An RHQ staff member, who understands Karen, has been deeply involved in the refugee support. She has been supporting the resettled refugees from the beginning and visits them almost daily to help address their daily life issues, such as reading letters from school. When asked about whom they turn to when they are in trouble, all the refugees responded with her name and Volunteer A. However, RHQ terminated her involvement in the support in Misato. Many local volunteers expressed their disappointment and confusion regarding the sudden dismissal, especially on such short notice.

-Tokyo

The parents among the refugees who live in Tokyo have few social bridges. The only connections they have are with a supporter from JAR. Their children, on the other hand, have built connections with Japanese communities. For example, the youngest child from Family E has friends in her elementary school. She said that she prefers going out with her friends from school as compared with other refugees' children. During the author's visit to the family apartment, her friends arrived and asked her to go out. The middle child from Family E attends Japanese language lessons outside the school, which are conducted by the local community.

The conditions of social bridges differ between the refugees in Misato and Tokyo. The local support providers in Misato have provided continuous support to the refugees even after the initial six-month official support program ended. This helps the refugees gain access to Japanese language training. In addition, it provides them knowledge about living in Japan and a sense of belonging to the local community. The parents in Tokyo, on the other hand, have few interactions outside their ethnic community, while their children have deeper interactions with their Japanese friends. Thus, segregation of the parents in Tokyo was observed.

Social links

Social links represent connections with institutions (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 4).

-Misato

The refugees in Misato have connections with the local government. Volunteer A serves as a mediator between the local government and refugees. As mentioned in the section on social bridges, the Japanese language program by AJALT was made available due to his request. In addition, the local government actively supports the refugees. Two officers were always involved during the Japanese language program that began in October 2012. The officers shared not only official information about the refugees but also personal information such as the children's performance in school. During the program, they revealed their worries about the refugee children, as mentioned in the Education section.

-Tokyo

The resettlement refugees in Tokyo do not have many social links. Neither RHQ nor governments at any level have been involved with

the refugees in Tokyo since they moved from Chiba.

The refugees in Misato and Tokyo have different depths in the domain of social links. In Misato, Volunteer A, a local supporter, is the link between the refugees and the local government. Moreover, the local government has become deeply involved in the integration of the refugees. However, unlike the refugees in Misato, those in Tokyo do not have connections with any institutions. Thus, in this domain, too, their segregation is observed.

Section 3: Facilities

Language and cultural knowledge

These skills facilitate social connections, both with other communities and with state and voluntary agencies. Cultural knowledge includes practical information required for daily life, such as that regarding transport, utilities, and benefits, as well as customs and expectations. In addition, the domain should reflect measures of the community's knowledge of the cultural background of refugees (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 21).

-Misato

The refugees in Misato gain language and cultural knowledge from local support providers as well from the AJALT language program. The support providers also provide local information required for daily life, such as that regarding where to shop and transport. Moreover, the refugees demonstrate a desire to learn Japanese language and culture. During the language programs, they asked many questions concerning language and culture.

-Tokyo

According to AJALT A, the refugee parents living in Tokyo have not significantly improved

their knowledge of Japanese language and culture. AJALT conducts a test approximately bimonthly to assess the refugees' language level. During this study, the author had many opportunities to talk to the refugees. They appear to have less Japanese language competency as compared with the second group of resettlement refugees. In contrast, their children learn Japanese language and culture in school. Accordingly, the youngest child from Family E noted that she finds Japanese considerably easier in daily conversation.

Safety and stability

Community safety is a common concern among refugees and within the broader communities in which they live. Racial harassment and crime erodes confidence, constrains social connection, and distorts cultural knowledge (Ager & Strang, 2004, p. 22).

As many refugees noted the kindness of most people in Japan, they appear to have had no experiences that threaten their safety and stability.

Section 4: Foundation

The resettlement refugees are given refugee status, and they are informed that they will be granted permanent residency in Japan, although they do not know the timeframe for this. Thus, Rights and citizenship informs them

of the relevant details.

This chapter reviews the findings regarding the situation of the resettlement refugees in Japan using Ager and Strang's Indicator of Integration Framework. Overall, the local community of Misato has a more desirable situation of support as compared with Tokyo. While the refugees in Tokyo, especially parents, show indications of marginalization, those in Misato show indications of integration into the local community.

Chapter 4: Analysis

As discussed in previous chapters, the resettled refugees in Misato demonstrate more indications of social integration as compared with those in Tokyo. Reviewing the differences between these groups suggests the requirements for the successful integration of the resettled refugees.

The differences concentrate on the domains of Social bridges, Social links, Social bonds, and Language and cultural knowledge. Particularly, five factors within the domains indicate significant differences. In addition, this study identifies three critical factors for successful integration, which are not present in the refugee support in Misato or Tokyo, nor are they covered by Ager and Strang's The Indicators of Integration Framework. The following chart summarizes these factors:

Table 4: Factors necessary for successful social integration in Japan

Factor	Misato	Tokyo	Domain in Ager and Strang's Indicator
Support coordination in the local community	○	×	○ (Social bridges)
Participation of the local community	○	×	○ (Social bridges)
Active support of the local government	○	×	○ (Social links)

Continuous language and daily life support	○	×	○ (Language and cultural knowledge)
Proximity of residence	○	×	○ (Social bonds)
Sufficient information from the central government	×	×	×: does not exist (Participation of the central government)
Long-term planning	×	×	
Flexibility in support	×	×	

Section 1: Five Factors Necessary for Successful Social Integration in Japan

The findings indicate differences between the situations of the refugees in Misato and those

in Tokyo. These differences are primarily observed in the domains Social bridges, Social bonds, Social links, and Language and cultural knowledge of Ager and Strang's The Indicators of Integration Framework, reproduced below:

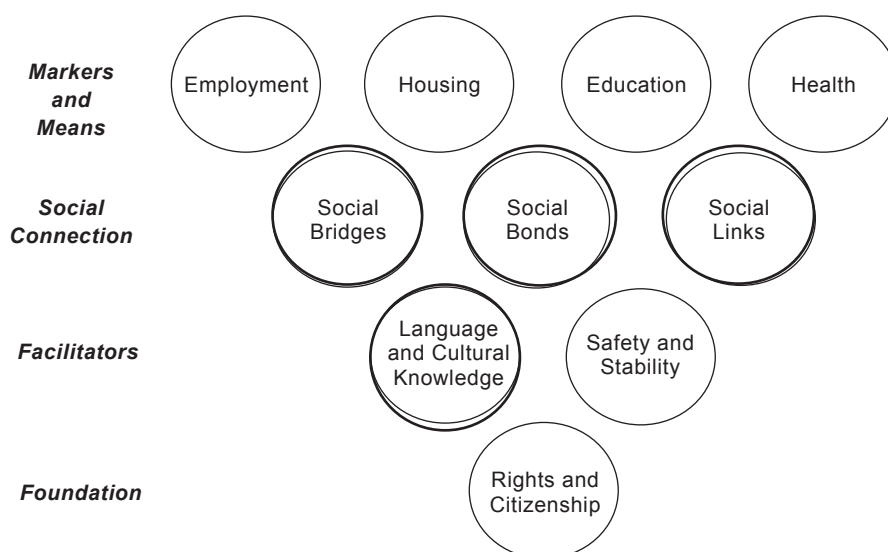


Figure 1: The Indicators of Integration Framework
 <Source: Ager and Strang, 2004, p.3 and developed by the author>

These differences, particularly the following five factors within four domains of Ager and Strang's model, influence the refugees' degrees of integration:

1. Support coordination in the local community
2. Participation of the local community
3. Active support of the local government

4. Continuous language training and daily life support
5. Proximity of residence

Support coordination in the local community

A major difference between the resettled refugees in Tokyo and those in Misato is the existence of a support coordinator.

In Misato, refugee support is coordinated through the leadership of Volunteer A. He asks local support providers for their support, and he arranges meetings with these support providers to discuss the requirements for the refugee support and to assign roles to each support provider. Moreover, he plays a central role as a mediator between the refugees and organizations such as the local government of Misato and the employers of the refugees. These activities facilitate sustainable support for the refugees.

However, in Tokyo, the absence of a support coordinator causes confusion in the refugee support. During the study, confusion among the refugees was observed, which was caused by the involvement of too many support providers. For example, two NGOs and a junior high school supported the oldest child from Family E for his high school entrance examination. All the organizations advised him differently about what to do for the exams and provided him different texts and homework. This confused him, and he felt overwhelmed by the homework he was assigned.

As the above example suggests, the refugee support system needs a leader to organize support activities. Especially, as the refugees live longer in Japan, various problems will occur, and various groups will need to participate to address these problems. Therefore, a coordinator is needed to organize support activities. The existence of a local leader is also noted in the UNHCR's handbook on resettlement as an important factor influencing the selection of specific placement communities and the placement of resettled refugees (UNHCR, 2010a, p.

61).

Participation of the local community

For successful local integration, local community participation is necessary. During the study, the refugees asked supporters and the author questions regarding their daily lives, revealing that they need help and advice for daily living, and that they need someone to whom they can easily ask questions within close proximity.

In addition, local people possess certain very important information (e.g., which health care services to use, local rules, and school-related information), which can only be obtained from them.

Furthermore, most support providers for the refugees are volunteers. Local people who live nearby and can easily participate are more suitable as volunteers for long-term support.

In the handbook on integration, UNHCR highlights the importance of the local community for successful integration. The handbook describes that building community capacity for equitable partnership in refugee reception and integration involves all sectors of the community (UNHCR, 2010a, p. 13).

Active participation of the local government

Another important difference between the situation of the refugees in Misato and those in Tokyo is the degree of participation of the local government.

In Misato, city officers comprehend and share information regarding the situations of the refugees with the leader, Volunteer A, and other supporters to provide necessary support for the resettled refugees. For example, Volunteer A realized that the refugee parents needed professional Japanese language lessons and requested funding from the city of Misato. The

city office negotiated with the central government, thus leading to the creation of the Japanese language program for the parents. In addition, city officers who frequently participated in the Japanese language program and took care of the children during the lesson share information about the refugee children with other supporters. They realized that the children needed educational support and discussed the situation with AJALT, including their possible role as the local government.

Active participation of the local government is necessary to supplement what volunteers are unable to do, such as provide a budget and formal education.

Continuous language training and daily life support

Continuous language training and daily life support (e.g., reading a letter from school) are also necessary for the social integration of the resettled refugees in Japan. AJALT teachers, who have experience in teaching non-native Japanese speakers, including refugees, often mentioned the difficulties of teaching the resettled refugees in Japan. According to the teachers, the resettled refugees in Japan require more time to learn Japanese.

The refugees in Misato have been receiving regular language and daily life support from local support providers. They indicated that they experienced fewer problems than before in their daily lives owing to the language training and daily life support. This suggests the importance of continuous language and daily life support for the refugees.

The “traditional resettlement countries”⁹ conduct long-term language training and explain the importance of language training for the integration of the refugees. Furthermore, the UNHCR handbook recommends an

enriched long-term language training program (3–5years) (UNHCR, 2010a, p. 131)

Proximity of residence

To effectively support the refugees, a certain proximity of residence is necessary. The refugees in Misato live physically close to each other, allowing supporters and the local government to gather them in one place to provide support. Further, the refugees can share local information, help each other, and prevent social isolation.

Proximity of residence helps the local community to provide support to the resettled refugees. In the case of Misato, most support providers live in or near Misato Danchi. They have easy access to the refugees’ residence, allowing them to make daily visits for support activities. Furthermore, the Japanese language program by AJALT is conducted at a community center inside Misato Danchi; therefore, the refugees and support providers can easily meet in one place.

Proximity of residence is also important for the resettled refugees. During the interview, the refugees in Misato mentioned the advantages of living close to each other: they can help each other and share information about living in Japan. Especially, the mothers of the four families help each other and share information about their children. Not only the refugees in Misato but also those in Tokyo often visit each other. Thus, to prevent isolation and facilitate mutual help, living close to each other is important.

According to an RHQ staff member, the residences of the refugees are determined considering the distance to their workplaces.¹⁰ However, it is also necessary to choose a community, such as Misato, that has a large number of foreign residents and a basic support system

for them. Furthermore, selecting a local community that is willing to accept the resettled refugees is also important. The importance of choosing an accepting community is also specified in the UNHCR's resettlement handbook. The handbook explains factors influencing the selection of specific placement communities and the placement of resettled refugees. The factors include partnership potential, such as the existence of NGOs, local service agencies, and civic or religious organization, to serve as partners in supporting newly arrived refugees (UNHCR, 2010a, p. 61).

Section 2: Additional Important Domain for Successful Integration in Japan

The four domains are necessary to facilitate local integration of resettled refugees. However, one important domain for integration in Japan is not present in Ager and Strang's model: participation of the central government. Especially, the following factors derived from the absence of the central government's participation makes local integration in Japan difficult.

1. Absence of information from the central government
2. Absence of long-term planning
3. Absence of flexibility in support

This section analyzes these factors and explains their importance to the successful integration of resettled refugees in Japan.

Absence of information from the central government

Many support providers stated their frustration at the lack of information provided by the central government, especially in preparation for accepting refugees. They commented that if the Japanese government provided sufficient information, they would be able to provide sig-

nificantly better support to the resettled refugees.

Volunteer A mentioned that he was asked to support the refugees by the Japanese government in March 2011. However, the government did not provide sufficient information about the refugees, such as their family situation and educational level. Volunteer A faced many difficulties, such as how to cope with the refugees' low competency in Japanese. In addition, he complained that the central government did not inform him of the budget for training courses for "foreigners as residents in Japan" until he inquired through the city of Misato.

The AJALT teachers also faced difficulties in preparing for the Japanese language program for the resettled refugees. They complained that the Japanese government informed them that the refugees were fully educated and had English language competency. However, the refugees who arrived did not match this description. Therefore, the teachers had to reconsider the program they had prepared. They stated that if given accurate information, they could have prepared a considerably better program.

As the above examples indicate, the lack of sufficient information from the government caused confusion in the support activities. To provide more effective support to the refugees and to help support providers in accepting the resettled refugees, the government needs to provide accurate and detailed information for the service providers.

Absence of long-term planning

Thus far, the central government has only planned a short-term support program for the resettled refugees. The Japanese government only budgets for an initial half-year program, half-year local support, and an extra Japanese

language program in Misato.

Both the volunteers and refugees in Misato are frustrated because no official support program has been budgeted after the Japanese language program ended in March 2013. The support providers in Misato voluntarily continued to support the refugees, but the refugees require professional training that the volunteers cannot provide. Moreover, the refugees demonstrate an eagerness to further learn the Japanese language culture.

Refugee Resettlement: An International Handbook to Guide Reception and Integration refers to a planned 3–5 years long-term language support program (UNHCR, 2010a, p. 131). Especially for the resettled refugees in Japan who require more time for learning, a short-term language program is insufficient.

Absence of flexibility in support

Absence of flexibility in the support program prevents the swift social integration of resettled refugees.

As mentioned in the research findings, an RHQ staff member played a key role in supporting the refugees in Misato. However, RHQ dismissed her in February 2013 because she was overcommitted to the program, which was considered inappropriate under the RHQ's policy.¹¹ Her sudden departure confused not only the refugees but also the other local support providers.

Furthermore, according to the rules of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, only parents are eligible for the Japanese language program in Misato, which is managed by AJALT. Children are not allowed to participate, even though they too need to learn Japanese, and they need to be cared for by someone during the lessons.

The central government enforces these rules on the support providers without considering

the needs of the refugees.

The absence of these three factors hinders the integration of the resettled refugees in Japan. The factors, which are necessary for social integration, must be addressed by the central government of Japan. Therefore, active participation of the central government is important to the Japanese model of integration into a local community. This domain is not included in Ager and Strang's Indicators of Integration.

Conclusion

This study examined the requirements for the successful integration of resettled refugees to improve Japan's resettlement program.

Based on interviews with the resettled refugees in Tokyo and Misato and their support providers, the degrees of integration between the refugees in Misato and those in Tokyo are found to be different. The refugees in Misato demonstrate better integration compared with those in Tokyo. These differences are generated by the different support provided to the refugees.

This study revealed five factors that exist in the support provided in Misato but not in Tokyo. First, it was found that the coordination of support is important to avoid overlapped support, which confuses the refugees. Second, participation of the local community is important to provide daily support. Third, active support of the local government is important to cover support that cannot be provided by volunteers (e.g., education and budget). Fourth, continuous language training and daily life support enhance integration into Japanese society. Finally, proximity of residence allows refugees to provide mutual assistance and share information as well as allows support providers to provide efficient support.

Furthermore, the study identified three critical factors for successful integration that do not exist in the support provided to the refugees in Misato or Tokyo. Moreover, these factors are not covered by Ager and Strang's The Indicators of Integration Framework. First, an absence of information prevents service providers from providing efficient support to the resettled refugees. Second, long-term planning is important for successful integration. This is also stressed by the UNHCR's handbook on resettlement. Third, absence of flexibility in support hampers the swift social integration of refugees. The central government should not enforce the existing rules without considering necessary exceptions for the refugees.

It is important to improve the Japanese resettlement program and make it comparable with other countries' programs—especially that of Finland, which is considerably similar to Japan. In Finland, supporting municipalities are determined before the arrival of the resettled refugees, who directly settle into these predetermined municipalities. The program is flexible and creates an integration plan for each refugee, which considers their potential for integration and needs. The integration support continues for three years and includes language studies, vocational training, and acquisition of knowledge and abilities required to integrate into Finnish society. Even after three years, Finnish language learning assistance is provided by the municipalities. Other traditional resettlement countries also offer medium- or long-term support programs to resettled refugees after the refugees have settled in their local host community. In addition, many organizations, which are primarily support providers to the resettled refugees, such as municipalities, local communities, and/or NGOs, cooperate to provide support.

Upon closer examination of the above facts, the author suggests that the following is required for the successful integration of the resettled refugees in Japan: First, the Japanese government should determine where the refugees settle on the basis of the support provided rather than the workplace. It should select a community that maintains certain proximity among the refugees. Furthermore, the community should be able to provide support in the form of a leader and support providers. Second, the support system after the refugees settle into their municipality needs to be strengthened. In addition, the network among the central government, accepting municipalities, support providers, and the resettled refugees needs to be developed, along with flexibility in support and medium- to long-term planned support.

However, there are notable limitations to the study. First, its results were derived from a limited sample of interviews; the resettled refugees in Japan are limited to 45 people. In addition, there was limited access to the wives in Misato and the parents in Tokyo. Second, there were certain difficulties during the interviews. The author did not use a translator for three reasons: (1) the refugees disliked the formal interviews, (2) the Karen refugees had limited translating skills, and (3) some Karen translators had personal problems with the resettled refugees. The author interviewed the resettled refugees in Japanese, but their low Japanese language competency was an obstacle to communication. In addition, the interviews were primarily conducted during and after the Japanese language support program. Therefore, what they could and would say might have been limited.

Future studies should develop a Japanese version of Ager and Strang's The Indicator of

Integration Framework. This study utilizes their Indicators of Integration as the theoretical framework. However, there is one important domain for social integration in Japan that is not included in this model: participation of the central government. As explained in Section 2 of Chapter 4, this domain is important for successful integration in Japan. Therefore, a Japanese version of Indicator of Integration must be developed and studied.

¹ The term “resettlement program” refers to resettling refugees from one state to another under the auspices of UNHCR.

² The author refers to the Union of Myanmar as Myanmar in this paper, following the usage of terms in UNHCR’s official publication.

³ Association for Japanese-Language Training

⁴ The author interviewed Takizawa on May 18, 2013.

⁵ In Misato, 77% of the foreign residents are East or Southeast Asian (calculated by the author) (City of Misato, 2012).

⁶ Author interview with City officer A.

⁷ Author interview with Volunteer D.

⁸ Author interview with Officer A.

⁹ According to UNHCR, this includes Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, and the United States (UNHCR, 2012b).

¹⁰ Author interview of the staff member on December 13, 2012.

¹¹ The author interviewed her on March 3, 2013.

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