



Annual Report

Report for Fiscal 2023

April 2023 - March 2024

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The Toyota Foundation celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2024 since its foundation in 1974. The cover photo shows the Kamo Ohashi Bridge over the Kamo River in Kyoto. The photo was taken during a reporting trip to interview one of the grant recipients for the special feature called "10 years after receiving the grant, now and the future." Please visit the 50th Anniversary special website for the interview articles on grant recipients and other content items.
Photo taken by Yoko Niide



Message from the President



Dr. HANEDA Masashi
President
The Toyota Foundation (Public Interest Incorporated Foundation)

The Toyota Foundation's approach to problem-solving in fiscal 2023

In fiscal 2023, the Toyota Foundation gave grants to a total of 45 projects under its six different grant program frameworks: the two Special Subjects "Co-Creating New Society with Advanced Technologies" and "Migrants and Japanese Society," "Fostering the Autonomous Society under 'New Normal' Based upon the Inventive Ideas (the Grant Program for Community Activities in Japan)," Interlinkages and Innovation for Future Societies" (the Research Grant Program), "Cultivating Empathy Through Learning from Our Neighbors: Practitioners' Exchange on Common Issues in

Asia" (the International Grant Program), and the Initiative Program. The grant amount totaling roughly 350 million yen was provided to these projects.

It is my hope that these projects are carried out in such a way as to envision what the Foundation thinks is desirable human-to-human connections and exchanges, implement IT and other cutting-edge industrial technologies more in society, and deepen further collaboration with like-minded organizations, thereby making steady progress toward solving various societal issues.

The shocking advent of ChatGPT

Advances in artificial intelligence (AI) over the past few years are astonishing, and the year 2023, in particular, will go down in history as the year of the rise of generative AI ChatGPT. Characterized by its smooth dialogue with human users, ChatGPT surprises us by giving an answer clearly and swiftly to any complex question we may pose. For instance, if we ask a question such as "what would be specific grant themes that a Japanese private grant-making organization needs to take on in order to revitalize a local community?" ChatGPT will quickly give an answer with a list of seven major items -- promoting local economy, strengthening education and personnel development, preserving the environment, advancing arts and culture, improving health and wellbeing, boosting disaster preparedness and safety measures, and encouraging greater civic participation -- along with two subitems each. These seem quite plausible and valid.

While it is necessary to examine the authenticity of such an AI-generated response, even a human expert, if asked to do so, would have had to spend at least a few weeks to produce an equivalence of such information until a few years ago. And yet, ChatGPT can now offer it immediately and, better yet, free of charge. This is none other than a revolutionary change.

AI unconstrained by physical body VS humans constrained by physical bodies

I served as the Director of Tokyo College, the University of Tokyo until the end of March this year. Tokyo College -- a university-wide organization aimed at sharing the latest outcomes of leading-edge and interdisciplinary research with students and citizens

-- took on the issue of AI as one of its all-important research topics. Therefore, I planned, hosted, and moderated four roundtable discussions on AI including ChatGPT from 2022 through 2023. Intellectually-stimulating and lively discussions were held on each occasion, and the latest round was titled "AI and Creativity," with the participation of pianist Hayato Sumino, two professional Go players Asami Ueno and Hirofumi Ohashi, AI expert Hitoshi Matsubara, and associate professor Arisa Ema who specializes in science and technology studies. You can watch our roundtable discussion on the Tokyo College YouTube channel. (<https://www.youtube.com/@TOKYOCOLLEGE/FEATURED>)

What left me a lasting impression from this roundtable was an exchange of opinions triggered by Mr. Sumino's remarks. He said, "I do improvising on the piano keyboard and have that performance recorded. When I listen to it later, I find there is something good in it. It doesn't come from my thinking but springs out of my body. There are such moments of 'unintended creativity.'" In the discussion that followed, Mr. Ohashi argued that limitations in the form of human physical body may help generate individuality instead, and Mr. Matsubara pointed out that computers had no (physical) limitations, thus leading to no creations.

Humans possess creativity because of limitations in the form of physical body, but computers without physical body do not have the capacity for creation. Listening to this intriguing conversation, I was thinking about the issue of space and time -- the two factors that significantly restrict human activities.

Spatial and time limitations

We, humans, are unable to meet and talk face-to-face with other people who are distant in both space and time. I would say these are limitations due to our physical body. Over the past century, however, spatial limitations have been overcome considerably. The invention of the telephone has allowed us to talk to people in places far from us, and the use of internet today enables us to communicate with people halfway across the globe while looking at their faces, albeit on the screen. We can even go to the trouble to board an airplane or use other means of transportation to go see them in person.

On the other hand, humans still have no power over time limita-

tions. For now, it is still impossible to go back in time or leap into the future to talk to people in the past or in the future. Even a time-zone difference, which needs to be taken into consideration when holding an online meeting with counterparts in distant places, remains an insurmountable barrier. In other words, humans that have physical bodies are still constrained by limitations in the form of time.

Then, what about computers that do not have restrictive physical bodies like ours? Can they travel back and forth in time? The answer is no, at least for now. Does this mean that we need to regard time not as a limitation but as a default condition? Even so, I wonder if we can change that default condition by using computers. During the roundtable discussion, I was entertaining such a fantasy-like thought, which must have been ridiculed by physicists.

50-year Anniversary Grant Program "Envisioning Human Society 50 Years Ahead"

The Toyota Foundation is set to accept applications for its 50-year Anniversary Grant Program in September 2024, titled "Envisioning Human Society 50 Years Ahead." At this half-a-century milestone, the Foundation intends to call for project proposals focused on what needs to be done now, with an eye toward 50 years ahead. The program title includes the time span of 50 years as a fixed default condition. It also incorporates such concepts as human and society as a given. Nevertheless, we should be able to come up with new plans that can revisit and challenge these very concepts and default condition. Needless to say, a pure fantasy or a wish like mine mentioned earlier is out of the question. That said, I am looking forward to receiving a great number of research project proposals that are imaginative, intellectually stimulating, and highly desirable.

In addition to the Foundation's regular grant-making activities, a series of 50-year anniversary special events, including this anniversary grant program, is planned for fiscal 2024. To make all these activities successful, we, the Toyota Foundation, need warm advice and support from all the stakeholders interested in our activities. We would like to ask for your continued strong support for us.

October, 2024

[April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024]

The Challenges the Toyota Foundation Tackled in FY 2023

As in the previous fiscal year, the Toyota Foundation (the TF/the Foundation) made grants in fiscal 2023 under the frameworks of the two Special Subjects: “Co-Creating New Society with Advanced Technologies” and “Migrants and Japanese Society,” and under the frameworks of the three grant programs: the “Grant Program for Community Activities in Japan,” the “Research Grant Program,” and the “International Grant Program,” as well as of the “Initiative Program” – all for the sake of achieving greater happiness of people.

As our society has seen the acceleration of aging populations with declining birthrates and disruptive changes in the international situation, we are now approaching an inflection point where we are increasingly required to change our ways of life and livelihoods. Given such new social demands, it is likely that we will have to envisage what connections and exchanges among people should look like and realize such an ideal state by implementing IT and other industrial technologies in society appropriately. With these perspectives in mind, we have made grants in all the programs in this fiscal year, too.

Below is the outline of the respective grant programs:

Programs with a public call for proposals

**The Specific Subject
Co-Creating New Society with
Advanced Technologies**

The TF made grants to projects dealing with changes of the times and social challenges caused by new technologies such as AI, and to supporting exploratory individual research projects.

**The Specific Subject
Migrants and Japanese
Society**

The TF made grants to projects involving investigations, surveys, and practices that were expected to contribute to building an overall system for accepting foreigners.

The Research Grant Program

The TF implemented two programs designed to contribute to fostering and supporting young researchers. One was a collaboration in partnership with an outside organization (the Institute for Future Initiatives (IFI), the University of Tokyo). The other one was intended to support joint research projects conducted mainly by young researchers.

Programs with closed application process

The Initiative Program

The TF actively sought out and made grants to projects that it found deemed worthy of its support and its voluntary, proactive engagement. Moreover, it provided a grant to the project intended to disseminate and spread the outcomes and methods of the past grant-awarded projects to society in an impactful way.

Looking Back the Toyota Foundation's FY 2023

[April 3 to June 3]
The International Grant Program
Call for Proposals

[April 7 to June 9]
The Research Grant Program
Call for Proposals

[April 10 to June 6]
The Grant Program for Community Activities in Japan
Call for Proposals



[September 4 to November 18]
Migrants and Japanese Society Call for Proposals

[September 22 to November 30]
Co-Creating New Society with Advanced Technologies
Call for Proposals



Dr. Arisa Ema (far left), the representative of the grant-awarded project in fiscal 2018 titled Building platform on ethics and governance of artificial intelligence, discusses with other experts from Japan and abroad recommendations for the G7 Hiroshima AI Process. Based on this discussion, "Pathways to AI Governance Coordination: Policy Recommendations for the G7 Summit" was compiled and made public. Please scan the QR code for details.



The Special Subject Co-Creating New Society with Advanced Technologies

Overview

Program Title

Co-Creating New Society with Advanced Technologies

Call for Proposals

September 22 to November 30, 2023

Project Period

One to three years, beginning May 1, 2024

Total Amount of Grants

40 million yen

"Co-Creating New Society with Advanced Technologies" is a grant program which covers research projects that address social issues concerning cutting-edge science and technology, particularly digital technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, Robot, and Blockchain. As such, the program has called for ambitious projects aimed at tackling issues -- how to better use digital technologies including AI, how such technologies transform our society, and how humans and society should be like in the future.

This program was originally launched in fiscal 2018 as a Special Subject of the Research Grant Program. In the following year, however, the Special Subject was upgraded to become a new grant program independent of the Research Grant Program and has since been operated as such.

Grant Results () Fiscal 2022

	Number of Applications	Number of Grants	Value of Grants (¥ Million)	Budget (¥ Million)	Acceptance Rate (%)
Joint Research	27(19)	5(5)	37.55(35.0)	35.0	18.5(26.3)
Individual Research	14(12)	2(5)	2.45(7.0)	5.0	35.7(41.7)
Total	41(31)	7(10)	40.0(42.0)	40.0(40.0)	17.1(32.3)

Since fiscal 2020, the spread of the new coronavirus has accelerated the use of digital technologies at a rapid pace in society, adding to the importance of dealing with issues relating to society and technology, a trend seen as characteristics of the past few years.

Since fiscal 2022, the framework for grant-target projects has been partially revised. In addition to the existing joint research project, a new framework has been put in place for offering support to exploratory individual research projects, with the aim of discovering young researchers.

As in the preceding years, application requirements were such that the representative of a project should have his/her main place of residence in Japan, regardless of their nationality and experience, and that the main purpose of a project should not be about technological development.

The application requirements for the joint research grant were such that the project representative must be 45 years old or younger, as specified in the previous year. Also, a joint research project should be cross-sector and cross-discipline in terms of team member composition, research purpose and content, contribute to international research and activities, and clearly state methods for disseminating research outcomes.

The application requirements for the individual research project were such that applicants should be 40 years old or younger and engage in an exploratory research project de-

signed to adopt a unique and ambitious approach to various issues surrounding advanced technologies. Moreover, the requirements were such that an exploratory research project should be conscious of social impact of its research; should not be mainly about making an individual's achievement in terms of research purpose and content; and should hold the potential for being developed into a joint research project.

As for public calling for proposals, the Foundation held online briefing sessions, posted notices on relevant NPO/NGO portal websites, and notified to like-minded groups on social networks. As such, the TF made efforts to widely disseminate information about public calling for this grant program.

In the end, the number of applications totaled 41, a slight increase compared with the previous year. Moreover, the average age of applicants became lower a little, which is a welcome trend given that the program's emphasis on supporting young researchers. Meanwhile, the number of selected projects was seven – five out of 27 applications for the joint research grant (compared with five out of 19 in the previous year) and two out of 14 applications for the individual research project grant (five out of 12 the previous year). Despite an increase in the number of applications, the number of selected projects declined instead. Nevertheless, each of these selected projects were intended to aim for co-creating new society with advanced technologies and to confront and actively cope with societal issues from various perspectives.

Comments

Comments by Selection Committee Chair Yasuo Kuniyoshi

This year marks the sixth year that we have invited proposals for research projects under the Special Subject "Co-creating New Society with Advanced Technologies" which was launched in 2018, and the second year for the individual research projects, the framework we established last year to

support more exploratory research challenges.

Recent advancements in digital technologies, notably generative AI, have expanded beyond text and image generation to pioneering applications across various sectors, sig-

nificantly transforming the world. These technologies also present critical challenges, including issues related to copy-right, career impacts, credibility, fake videos, and shifts in human relationships and creativity. It is imperative that we address these issues promptly. Our grant program is dedi-cated to supporting ambitious research that explores these transformative trends and investigates collaborative oppor-tunities between humans and advanced technologies.

This year, we received a total of 41 applications, which was up slightly from last year. In addition, the average age of applicants fell to approximately 35.9 for joint research proj-ects (37.8 last year) and 32.1 for individual research projects (36.2 last year). Overall the number of applications from young researchers has increased. This is a welcome trend considering the importance we have placed on supporting young researchers. However, the outcome of the selection process was that only 2 out of 14 individual research project proposals (5 out of 12 last year) and 5 out of 27 joint re-search project proposals (5 out of 19 last year) were select-ed. This means that even though the number of applications increased, the number of accepted ones decreased.

Given these circumstances, we need to meticulously review our methods for soliciting proposals. Upon reflection, it ap-pears that many proposals, while solid, lacked the originality required for both joint and individual research projects. Moreover, there were many rather narrow individual research proposals that were extensions of existing research topics and only involved dissemination of academic results such as presentations at academic conferences. The Special Sub-ject program supports research projects that seek to ad-dress the theme of “co-creation” between humans and ad-vanced technologies with a more open-minded and ambitious approach to tackle what questions we need to ask now. We expect to receive proposals that cut across social issues and challenge the design of social systems without being constrained by old values. Next year, we hope to see an increase in the number of creative proposals that are unique to the Toyota Foundation’s grant program. We shall communicate the objectives of the program and its dif-ferences from other grant programs more carefully than in the past to promote understanding of them among grant applicants.

Nevertheless, the research projects that were ultimately se-lected were futuristic and ambitious in seeking to address the social issues surrounding rapid advances in digital tech-nologies. Below, we introduce one of the selected joint re-search projects and one of the individual research projects.

<Joint Research>

D23-ST-0031 Mayu Koike (Assistant Professor, Depart-ment of Industrial Engineering and Economics, School of Engineering, Tokyo Institute of Technology)

Social Psychology of the Metaverse: The Interactions, Developments, and Risks of Social Relations between Agents and Humans

In recent years, there have been proposals for services using the metaverse in various fields, including education and medical welfare. However, there has hardly been any dis-cussion of how users recognize avatars and build social re-lationships in the metaverse. This research is a challenging project that focuses on the experiential and intellectual knowledge that human beings use to build social relation-ships in the real world with the aim of clarifying the extent to which this knowledge is applicable in the metaverse world while building a social psychology of the metaverse. It is hoped that the results of this research will serve as a guide for sorting out issues when the metaverse is applied in a wide range of fields in the future.

<Individual Research>

D23-ST-0034 Kaito Wakabayashi (Project Researcher, Research Center on Ethical, Legal and Social Issues, Osaka University)

Dilution of “Totality of Relationships” Caused by Social Media

AI-based recommendation functions, for example, create bias in the information people receive and connect people with people they want to connect with, contributing to indi-vidualization and fragmentation. This study is an ambitious project that will seek to discuss the ideas behind the design of social media in response to such concerns. The distinc-tive feature of this project is the methodology of observing an individual’s life history from both the social media space and the real space, focusing on the lack of context and background in social media, which this research raises as the problem of “the dilution of totality of relationships”. It is expected to take a pointed approach to the subtleties of communication style and propose new insights into the state of social media and other platforms.

List of Grants

*Note: The project titles among other things on this list are those at the time of grant approval.

Joint Research

Grant Number	Project Title Project Leader Position, Organization	Grant Amount(Yen)
D23-ST-0006	Brain Liberty: Neuroprivacy Hiroshi Miyashita, Faculty of Policy Studies, Chuo University	7,600,000
D23-ST-0012	Exploring the Factors Influencing the Social Acceptance of Generative AI and their Cultural Differences Taichi Murayama, Faculty of Environment and Information Sciences, Social Environment and Information, Yokohama National University	7,000,000
D23-ST-0022	Data Commons Concept for Smart Technology Implementation: Mechanisms and Challenges of Big Data Utilization in Smart Homes for Seniors Kazushi Matsumura, Department of Mass Communications,, Faculty of Arts and Literature, Seijo University	6,200,000
D23-ST-0031	Social Psychology of The Metaverse: The interactions, developments, and risks of social relations between agents and humans Mayu Koike, Department of Industrial Engineering and Economics, School of Engineering, Science Tokyo	9,200,000
D23-ST-0040	Verification of the usefulness and validity of blockchain, DAO, etc. in decision-making for solving issues and designing legal systems with multi-stakeholders Kotaro Motoshima, Co Create DAO LLC	7,550,000

Individual Research

Grant Number	Project Title Project Leader Position, Organization	Grant Amount(Yen)
D23-ST-0007	Clinical Application of Transformer-based Deep Learning Models for Predicting Disease Using Multimodal Data and Identifying Most Dominant Factors Kengo Takahashi, Tohoku University Graduate School of Medicine	1,000,000
D23-ST-0034	Dilution of “totality of relationships” caused by social media Kaito Wakabayashi, Research Center on Ethical, Legal and Social Issues, Osaka University	1,450,000

Number of Applications	Number of Grants	Value of Grants (¥ Million)	Budget (¥ Million)	Acceptance Rate (%)
54(44)	6(5)	55.0(47.5)	50.0(50.0)	11.1(11.4)

- To study any changes and impacts on various aspects of Japanese society due to an increase in foreign migrants, and consider what kind of response measures are possible.
- To identify factors behind various issues facing foreign migrants, present and implement improvement measures.
- To create a common platform for solving problems by connecting those grassroots supporters of foreign migrants with other stakeholders such as researchers, government workers, local community members, foreign migrants themselves and other parties concerned.

In fiscal 2023, the Foundation started accepting applications from September through mid-November and received a total of 54 proposals, and six projects were selected and approved for grants through deliberations by the Selection Committee and the Board of Directors.

Moreover, the TF organized briefing and information ex-

change sessions for grant project stakeholders including grant recipients in Tokyo and Nagoya in order to deepen exchanges and discussions among them, and it also created and published a compendium compiling reports from the grant-awarded projects from fiscal 2019, the first year of this grant program, to fiscal 2021. While the number of projects to receive grants is limited, the compendium features a variety of survey, research, and practice cases for reference purposes to many people concerned. What's more, the compendium was also translated into English. It is hoped that this booklet provides overseas stakeholders with information about the lesser-known situation surrounding "migrants" in Japan, despite migration being a global issue.

In fiscal 2024, the TF will continue to accept applications under the same theme. While continuing to monitor the progress of the already-granted projects individually, it plans to actively share insights by offering opportunities to compare notes among grant recipients themselves.



A photo of a shop selling a variety of colorful Hijab head coverings; a snapshot of a study abroad program in Malaysia from a grant-awarded project in fiscal 2019 (representative Ms. Ayako Kohno) titled "For Japanese medical care to be better for people from Islamic countries in Southeast Asia as well: Interactive communication strategy and social implementation through mixed-methods research."

The Special Subject Migrants and Japanese Society

Overview

Program Title

Migrants and Japanese Society

Call for Proposals

September 4 to November 18, 2023

Project Period

Two or three years beginning May 1, 2024

Total Amount of Grants

50 million yen

The Special Subject "Migrants and Japanese Society," a grant program launched in fiscal 2019, entered its fifth year in fiscal 2023 for calling publicly for project proposals.

In the spring of 2019, the Japanese government made a significant change in policy discussions from whether or not to accept foreigners to how to accept them. Given this policy shift, the Toyota Foundation launched this grant program in the belief that creating an environment enabling everyone to demonstrate their abilities to the fullest would in turn lead to the well-being of all people living in Japan, including foreign migrants. Based on this recognition, the TF defines five research areas including the creation of an environment allowing foreign migrants to fully utilize their abilities, and make grants to surveys, research, or practices that are expected to contribute to building a comprehensive system for accepting foreigners.

The program also aims to achieve the following three targets through the implementation of the selected projects.

Comments

Comments by Selection Committee Chair Shigeto Sonoda

This is the second time for me to read application documents as the chair of the Selection Committee, and I've realized that my evaluation standards became higher than in the previous fiscal year. This is because I read impressive applications last year, which eventually elevated the selection criteria. Perhaps because of this, I felt this year's selection was not as difficult as before.

As in previous years, we called for proposals on any of the five themes below.

- (1) Creation of an environment for maximizing the skills and potential of foreign talent
- (2) Minimizing gaps among foreign residents in their access to information
- (3) Examination of human and other resources in support of the care and support systems for foreign residents
- (4) Attracting skilled human resources from abroad

(5) Lessons from insights and experiences gained through Japanese companies' overseas operations

Overview of the Situation and Details of Application

The proposal submission period was from September 4 (Mon.) to November 18 (Sat.), 2023. During this period, approximately 100 people, which is roughly twice the number of last year, participated in two online briefing sessions that we held on September 14 and September 20. Program officers (POs) held approximately 20 preliminary consultations, which is about the same number as before.

The total number of projects that were registered increased from 68 to 90. In the end, 54 project representatives applied for grants, which is 10 projects more than in FY 2022.

The median amount requested by the 54 applications was

10 million yen (with a minimum of 5 million yen and a maximum of 10 million yen), with more than half of the applications requesting 10 million yen. Therefore, before the selection process had begun it was predicted that the number of selected applicants would not be large.

In terms of the attributes of the projects' representatives, 17 were full-time university researchers, a significant increase from 12 in the previous fiscal year, while 8 were NPO/NGO staff, a decrease from 11 in FY 2022. This change has to do with an increase in the number of applications whose themes were related to (4) attracting skilled human resources from abroad. The results of the questionnaire that 38 of the applicants answered show that a total of 18 people had experience applying for grants, and 11 of them had experience applying for this program.

Many of the 26 previously awarded projects were related to themes (1) and (2), while only a small number of them covered the themes of (4) and (5). However, we could sense a change from the previous trends, and it is particularly noteworthy that the number of applications as well as selected projects on theme (4) has increased.

Selection process and results

The POs first reviewed the application documents and removed those that were incomplete or did not meet the prerequisites, and then three members of the Selection Committee read all applications carefully. After reading the applications, the committee members put questions to the representatives of good projects to check whether an award was justified.

A meeting of the Selection Committee was held on February 9, 2024. The committee's discussion lasted almost two hours and it decided to award grants to six projects. Below is a brief introduction to each project.

D23-MG-0017 Megumi Yuki (Professor, Gunma University)

“Development of a Model for Promoting the Inflow of High-skilled Talent and Enhancing the Acceptance Environment Based on the Decision-making Process Regarding the Selection of ‘Rural’ Areas for High-skilled Talent”

This project, which is related to themes (1) and (4), seeks to create a flow of high skilled human resources in Japan who choose to work and settle in rural areas through a collaboration involving the industrial, government, academia and fi-

ancial sectors. Specifically, it aims to establish a consortium centered on Gunma University to develop a curriculum that promotes local employment and to clarify its effectiveness by comparing the case of Gunma with other regions. Kobayashi's proposal in D23-MG-0030 targets the second generation of settled foreigners, while this proposal targets foreign students studying at universities. Both of them, however, share the same view of foreign human resources as providing a breakthrough for local revitalization. While the feasibility of the projects was positively evaluated, there was an opinion in the Selection Committee that careful investigation would be required in the modeling of the retention of highly skilled human resources by checking the significance of variables which were not mentioned in the applications.

D23-MG-0021 Yasuhiro Inoue (Vice President, Osaka Restaurant Management Association)

“Study on Mismatch Structure between Foreign Job Seekers and Job Providers in the Food Service Industry and Development of Resolves”

This project, which is related to theme (2), aims to clarify the mismatch between foreign job seekers and job providers in Japan by focusing on the food service industry. This is a timely proposal, given the current situation in the food service industry where the labor shortage is becoming a serious problem. This project is attractive because the applicant specifically focuses on job seekers from Indonesia and tries to consider the situation of the sending country. However, some members of the Selection Committee pointed out that the project should be managed with care, because (1) it is necessary to carefully plan the research, including the kinds of jobs job seekers had in their sending country and (2) it is indispensable to take into account not only the situation in the labor market but also the job seekers' living conditions, lifestyles, languages, etc. in Japan.

D23-MG-0030 Kaori Kobayashi (Associate Professor, School of Cross-Cultural Studies, Sugiyama Jogakuen University)

“Toyota City Initiative! A Joint Industry-Government-Academia Collaboration to Promote Multicultural Regional Co-Creation for the Next Generation of Foreign Residents Settling in Japan”

This project, which is related to theme (1), targets the next generation of foreign residents from Brazil, Vietnam, the Philippines, etc. who are settling in Toyota City, Aichi Prefecture, and it intends to nurture the sustainability of the region by supporting them in their careers. It aims to revitalize the local economy by promoting multicultural tourism mainly through support for the next generation of foreign residents

in collaboration with universities, governments, companies, NPOs, and so on. It was appraised as a highly feasible proposal, given that it was well-planned and coordinated with relevant stakeholders. On the other hand, some members of the Selection Committee requested that where the problem lies be clarified after critically examining the attempts that Toyota City has made in past years and that the project should encourage the city to collaborate with other municipalities that are in a similar environment.

D23-MG-0034 Kenichi Shishido (Board of Director/Acting Secretary General, JP-MIRAI)

“Development of Educational Materials for SMEs and Social Awareness to Improve the Environment for Accepting Migrant Workers”

This proposal, tackling theme (1), is an initiative aiming to develop educational materials targeting SMEs that cannot spend sufficient time to protect the human rights of foreign employees due to the lack of specialized staff who are familiar with labor laws and regulations. This project will take measures such as providing sufficient motivation to people in charge to expand this initiative by exemplary companies throughout supply chains, regions, industries and financial sectors. This proposal was highly evaluated due to its high feasibility through the collaboration with university teachers, lawyers and ILO experts. On the other hand, the Selection Committee wanted to read a detailed explanation of what was lacking in the existing educational materials and what the contents of the new educational materials would look like.

D23-MG-0036 Koichi Nakamura (Representative Director, eboard)

“Development of a ‘Yasashii Nihongo (Plain Japanese)’ Tool Using Generative AI and a Model for Its Effective Use in the Educational Field”

This proposal, which has to do with theme (2), aims to create a software application that will use “simplified Japanese” for descendants of foreign residents in the compulsory education system, something which has been neglected despite a growing awareness within national and local government organizations of the need to popularize “simplified Japanese.” The proposal was praised for sensing the needs in the educational field, partly because the NPO to which the representative belongs has been working on adding “easy subtitles” to video lessons. The Selection Committee claimed that (1) it was difficult to understand the difference between “simplified Japanese” using normal generative AI and “simplified Japanese” at schools and that (2) careful consideration should be given to whether to charge the ed-

ucational institutions a fee for the service.

D23-MG-0042 Ryo Watanuki (President, Research Institute of Japan Industry & Innovation)

“Research on Business Conditions of Foreign Entrepreneurs in Japan and Experimental Implementation of Supporting Programme for the Establishment of Necessarily Management Support”

This proposal, which is related to theme (4), focuses on foreign entrepreneurs, who have been overlooked in current discussions of the development of highly skilled human resources, to investigate the actual situation surrounding them and seek support measures for them. This project is quite attractive because it intends to clarify the actual situation of foreign entrepreneurs, who have been rarely researched, by using a list of more than 1,500 foreign entrepreneurs who have attended seminars organized by the applicant. On the other hand, the Selection Committee is aware that the key to the success of the investigation is whether they can get access to the foreign entrepreneurs (especially those who are from Asia other than Korean or Chinese) who are missing from the current list while ensuring feasibility.

Conclusion

Many of those who applied for this program had applied in the past, but none of those who were awarded grants were the representatives of previously selected projects. One possible reason is that new types of attractive proposals were excavated as interest in the use of highly skilled human resources has increased. Another reason may be that applicants who are interested in the themes of (2) and (3) are still implementing their projects, which made it difficult to apply this time. I would like to keep an eye on future trends to see what types of proposals will increase.

In the previous fiscal year, the total amount of the grants awarded was 47.5 million yen, 2.5 million yen short of the originally expected amount. In the current fiscal year, however, the total amount has increased 5 million yen from the originally planned 50 million yen. This is because the total amount charged by each project was large. I sincerely hope that those who were awarded grants will use them effectively.

List of Grants

*Note: The project titles among other things on this list are those at the time of grant approval.

Grant Number	Project Title Project Leader Position, Organization	Grant Amount(Yen)
D23-MG-0017	Development of a Model for Promoting the Inflow of High-skilled Talent and Enhancing the Acceptance Environment Based on the Decision-making Process Regarding the Selection of 'Rural' Areas for High-skilled Talent Megumi Yuki, Gunma University	9,500,000
D23-MG-0021	Study on Mismatch Structure between Foreign Job Seekers and Job Providers in the Food Service Industry and Development of Resolves Yasuhiro Inoue, Osaka Restaurant Management Association	9,500,000
D23-MG-0030	Toyota City Initiative! A Joint Industry-Government-Academia Collaboration to Promote Multicultural Regional Co-Creation for the Next Generation of Foreign Residents Settling in Japan Kaori Kobayashi, Sugiyama Jogakuen University School of Information and Social Design	8,500,000
D23-MG-0034	Development of Educational Materials for SMEs and Social Awareness to Improve the Environment for Accepting Migrant Workers Shishido Kenichi, JP-MIRAI	9,500,000
D23-MG-0036	Development of a 'Yasashii Nihongo (Plain Japanese)' Tool Using Generative AI and a Model for Its Effective Use in the Educational Field Koichi Nakamura, eboard	9,000,000
D23-MG-0042	Research on Business Conditions of Foreign Entrepreneurs in Japan and Experimental Implementation of Supporting Programme for the Establishment of Necessary Management Support Watanuki Ryo, Research Institute of Japan Industry & Innovation	9,000,000



A board game "The Dialogue with Future" developed by the fiscal 2021 grant-awarded project (representative Dr. Kengo Suzuki) titled Proposal for co-creation of sustainable future visions using a gaming approach: A case study of the Mini SMART EARTH concept.

The Research Grant Program

Overview

Program Title Interlinkages and Innovation for Future Societies Call for Proposals April 7 to June 9, 2023
Project Period Two years beginning November 1, 2023
Total Amount of Grants 50 million yen

As in the previous fiscal year, under the overall theme of "Interlinkages and Innovation for Future Societies," the Research Grant Program provided two program frameworks that help nurture and support young researchers engaged in research for transforming social systems.

The first one is intended to provide a stable research environment enabling promising young researchers, who are expected to become next-generation leaders, to work steadily on their research topics for five years. This is a collaboration in partnership with the Institute of Future Initiatives (IFI), the University of Tokyo. The other one is designed to support two-year joint research projects conducted through the leadership of young researchers.

[The Partnership Program for Nurturing Professionals]

As in the previous fiscal year, the Foundation provided a stable research environment for young researchers and helped nurture them in partnership with the Institute for Future Initiatives (IFI), the University of Tokyo. Research proj-

Number of Applications	Number of Grants	Value of Grants (¥ Million)	Budget (¥ Million)	Acceptance Rate (%)
100(82)	10(9)	59.0(50.0)	50.0(50.0)	10.0(10.9)

ects by three young researchers -- two young researchers selected in April 2022 and one researcher chosen in April 2023 -- were carried out. The TF also offered them opportunities to interact with other grant recipients from other grant programs, including through participation in a joint workshop for the Research Grant Program and the Special Subject “Co-Creating New Society with Advanced Technologies.”

[Joint Research Program]

As in the previous fiscal year, under the theme of “Interlinkages and Innovation for Future Societies,” the Foundation called for ambitious research projects that would urge society more than ever to transform the social system. From this fiscal year, the TF also decided to remove the subtitle “Reevaluating Social Issues and Forging New Solidarity in the New Normal Era” and instead called for projects aiming to address social issues from various areas and fields, without limiting its focus to issues highlighted by the new coronavirus.

As in the previous fiscal year, application requirements were such that a joint research project should be conducted by a team of two persons or more and that the project representative must be 45 years old or younger with his/her residence in Japan. Moreover, the requirements also stated that selected researchers would be required to disseminate their research outcomes beyond the boundaries of academia and more widely to society and to take practical measures including through drawing up policy recom-

mendations.

As for public calling for proposals, the Foundation held on-line briefing sessions to publicize the Joint Research Program widely and posted the relevant information on NPO/NGO-related portal sites, among other measures. The TF received a total of 100 applications and selected 10 proposals in the end. The number of applications increased slightly from the previous year. Moreover, the areas of research proposals received were more varied and, in particular, there were several research projects aimed at tackling international issues, which was a clear trend seen in the submitted applications.

In October, a joint workshop was held in a hybrid manner for the Research Grant Program and the Special Subject “Co-Creating New Society with Advanced Technologies” in order to share expertise and insights gained from the grant-awarded projects more widely and promote exchanges among grant recipients. The workshop titled “A Future Society Seen Through Interlinkages” put forward two items on agenda, held presentations by grant recipients in connection with those items, followed by a panel discussion with experts. The edited video of the workshop was made public on YouTube.

What’s more, the Foundation continued to hold “café meetings,” which it started in 2020, both online and in person so as to facilitate interaction among grant recipients across different grant programs.

on a global scale, the emergence of the Global South, changes in social demographics and attitudes to gender, and the possibilities and challenges arising from the advance of the information society, such as the practical application of generative AI. There is a need to address specific issues even if we cannot find academic or theoretical answers to the questions of what kind of society will emerge in the future or what kind of society is desirable. Based on this perspective, the Research Grant Program places an emphasis on research proposals that demonstrate a desire to disseminate research findings to society, and not only academic significance.

This year, we decided to provide grants to 10 projects out of 100 applications. Although the number of applications fell short of the 130 received in the year before last, it increased from the 82 applications we received last year. The ratio of male and female project representatives is almost fifty-fifty as it was last year, and just under 20% of the applications were in English. We felt that the quality of applications was higher on average and that there was more variety in the fields of study than last year. We were particularly impressed that several studies addressed international issues. We hope that this trend will continue in the future. In particular, we would like to see research proposals based on an awareness that even tackling familiar issues leads to knowledge that can be generalized as well as having a big vision that leads to solving issues on a global scale.

Below we introduce some of the selected research projects.

D23-R-0028 Yumi Yamanashi (Principal Researcher, Center for Research and Education of Wildlife, Kyoto City Zoo)

“Reconsidering the Relationship Between Humans and Animals in Zoos: Animal Welfare Assessment and Practice”

The concept of animal welfare (AW), which treats the relationship between humans and animals as being more equal, has assumed greater importance in recent years. In light of this, the project will aim to improve animal welfare by examining methods for objectively evaluating the men-

tal state of animals regardless of culture with collaboration between zoos in three countries: Japan, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

D23-R-0036 Masayasu Ishikawa (Association Professor, Department of Child Psychology, Faculty of Child Studies, Kamakura Women’s University)

“Effects of Introducing Developmental Support Apps in Schools: A Case Study on ‘P-LIN”

The Japanese government has revised the Outlines of Guidance and Counseling for developmental support for students in schools to emphasize a system based on teams of teachers. This research will develop a developmental support app for the Outlines and measure its effectiveness based on trial introduction in junior high schools with the aim of establishing a new framework for educational support.

D23-R-0026 Mimiko Nakazawa (Associate Professor, Graduate School of Science and Engineering, Academic Research Institute, Yamagata University)

“A Study on “Workplace that Truly Promotes Diverse Work Styles”: Creating with Robots in the Field of Employment of People with Disabilities”

In view of the current difficulties in communicating in the workplace environment between able-bodied people and people with mental (developmental) disabilities, this project aims to improve workplace communication by recording and analyzing workplace dialogue through the introduction of robotic pets, which have been used in workplace environments.

D23-R-0057 Tomohiro Hara (Lecturer, Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics, Musashi University)

“Building Ethnic Coexistence and Market Opportunities for High-Risk Populations”

In this project, researchers in the field of development economics and practitioners dealing with conflict resolution will work together to determine the extent to which providing vocational training for those members of the ethnic Somali community in Kenya who are at high risk of radicalization can promote ethnic coexistence, with the aim of measuring effectiveness and contributing to wider applications.

Comments

Comments by Selection Committee Chair Hiroshi Nakanishi

This year, we selected the applications for the third year of the Research Grant Program based on the theme of “Interlinkages and Innovation for Future Society.” Although the main theme is unchanged, this year we omitted the sub-theme of “Reevaluating Social Issues and Forging New Solidarity in the New Normal Era” in the hope that there would be more proposals based on a wider range of issues and interests than before.

Today, we are experiencing unprecedented changes in our social interactions and our interactions with the natural en-

vironment as well as in the state of the artificial world that we create using technology. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, over a short period of time, we experienced the shock of a drastic change in the way our society was connected, which we had previously taken for granted. Even though COVID-19 is now treated as a Class 5 infectious disease under the Infectious Diseases Control Law and the bustle of urban areas seems to have returned to its pre-pandemic level, the trend of change has continued. We face numerous issues that cannot be inferred from past experience, which include mounting international tensions

List of Grants

*Note: The project titles among other things on this list are those at the time of grant approval.

Partnership Program

Grant Number	Project Title Project Leader Position, Organization	Grant Amount(Yen)
D23-RC-0001	Partnership Programme: "Interlinkages and Innovation for Future Societies" Kensuke Fukushi, Director, Institute for Future Initiatives, the University of Tokyo	20,000,000

Joint Research Program

Grant Number	Project Title Project Leader Position, Organization	Grant Amount(Yen)
D23-R-0024	New Approaches and Concepts in University English Education Revolutionized by Generative AI: Implementing a System for Learning English without Teachers and Designing Classroom Environments Yamanaka Tsukasa, Professor, College of Life Sciences, Ritsumeikan University	5,000,000
D23-R-0026	A Study on "Workplace that Truly Promotes Diverse Work Styles": Creating with Robots in the Field of Employment of People with Disabilities Mimiko Nakazawa, Associate Professor, Yamagata University Academic Research Institute	6,800,000
D23-R-0028	Reconsidering the Relationship Between Humans and Animals in Zoos: Animal Welfare Assessment and Practice Yumi Yamanashi, Principal Researcher, Center for Research and Education of Wildlife, Kyoto City Zoo	6,700,000
D23-R-0036	Effects of Introducing Developmental Support Apps in Schools: A Case Study on "P-LIN" Masayasu Ishikawa, Associate Professor, Kamakura Women's University Faculty of Child Studies Department of Child Psychology	6,800,000
D23-R-0043	Establishment of a Support System for Drivers who Cease Driving After Injury or Illness Satoru Nasu, Chief, Establishment of a support system for interrupted drivers after injury or illness	6,000,000
D23-R-0045	Creating New Values and Social System Based on Collaboration Between Socially-withdrawn People and Regional Platforms Reeya Komoda, Full-time lecturer, Tottori University Faculty of Regional Sciences Department of Regional Development Studies	5,000,000
D23-R-0055	Establishing a School-Centered "Systemic Change Approach" to Improve Children's and Community Well-being Eri Shimomukai, CEO, roku you, inc	6,500,000
D23-R-0057	Building Ethnic Coexistence and Market Opportunities for High-Risk Populations Tomohiro Hara, Lecturer, Faculty of Economics, Musashi University	4,000,000
D23-R-0085	Reparative Design for Creating the Future from the Present of Post-war Society: Towards Transformative Justice Linking the Global and the Local Hiroko Kawaguchi, Research Fellow, Graduate School of Human Science, Osaka University	5,600,000
D23-R-0088	Supporting Community Health in Aging Rural Communities by Building Social Bonds ("Tsunagari") Between Elderly Residents and Local University Students: A "Health Supporter" System by University Students Utilizing Digital Technologies Yoshifumi Nin, President / Researcher, Non-Profit Organization ASHA / Institute for Promotion of Applied International Liberal Arts, Akita International University	6,600,000



A scene of a field trip by a group of researchers and indigenous people for the fiscal 2022 grant-awarded project (representative Dr. Hard N., Feuer) titled "Advancing indigenous wild gardens for healthy and biodiverse food systems in Asia: A transboundary and transdisciplinary platform for science and ethnic minority collaboration."

The International Grant Program

Overview

Program Title

Cultivating Empathy Through Learning from Our Neighbors: Practitioners' Exchange on Common Issues in Asia

Total Amount of Grants

70 million yen in total
One-year project: JPY 5,000,000
Two-year project: JPY 10,000,000

Required elements for Project

Transnational, Cross Sector, Mutual Learning, Foresight

Target Countries

East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia*1

Call for Proposals

April 3 to June 3, 2023

Project Period

One or two years beginning November 1, 2023

*1 · East Asia: Japan, China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, South Korea, Mongolia
· Southeast Asia: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vietnam
· South Asia: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

	Number of Applications	Number of Grants	Value of Grants (¥ Million)	Budget (¥ Million)	Acceptance Rate (%)
One-Year Grant	9(17)	0(0)	70.0	70.0	0(0)
Two-Year Grant	113(81)	8(9)			8.0(11.1)
Total	122(98)	8(9)	70.0	70.0	6.6(9.2)

In fiscal 2023, the International Grant Program continued with its theme from the previous year, “Cultivating Empathy Through Learning from Our Neighbors: Practitioners’ Exchange on Common Issues in Asia,” with an aim of supporting “cross-border exchanges among on-the-ground practitioners from more than two countries and finding solutions to common challenges facing Asia.” The program’s grant amount totaled 70 million yen, with the upper limit at 10 million yen per project, the same amount as in the preceding years.

The Foundation accepted a total of 122 applications during the two-month public-calling period from April to June, and selected eight proposals in the end. There was an increase in the number of prior inquiries and consultations, as well as of applications from the levels in the preceding years. This growth is believed to be due to more people interested in the grant program following the end of the pandemic and the inclusion of South Asia as the target region in fiscal 2022.

In addition, the TF worked to promote cooperation with grant recipients through means other than grant provision. On the occasion of Circular Design Week (CDW) 2023, a 7-day journey event held in Kagoshima in early December, 2023, the Foundation and grant recipients who were focused on a circular system as their key concept participated in the CDW conference and some fieldwork activities. The event is organized and hosted by Re:Public Inc., a Tokyo-based think-and-do-tank and a grant recipient of the International Grant Program. Some 100 participants from diverse sectors got together from several regions at home and abroad, mainly in the Asia-Pacific, including people from Re:Public and Taiwan partners. Not only did the Foundation explain the thinking behind its International Grant Program, people involved in grant-awarded projects made presentations about their efforts and exchanged opinions with other participants for two days.

The existing basic framework of the International Grant Program was first introduced in fiscal 2013, targeting only Japan and several Southeast Asian countries. The yen-dollar exchange rate was 80 yen per dollar back then, but the Jap-

anese currency has been weakening significantly over the past 10 years. The yen’s depreciation, coupled with higher prices globally, must have had a considerable impact on grant recipients that run international exchange and mutual visit projects over multiple years.

The Foundation will continue to not only make grants but also support the sharing of insights and expertise gained from grant-awarded projects on an equal footing through cooperation with overseas organizations, particularly those from other Asian countries.

Comments

Comments by Selection Committee Chair Shigeto Sonoda

The COVID pandemic has almost gone away and there are hardly any obstacles to traveling abroad. Since last fiscal year, the International Grant Program has come to cover South Asian nations including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, but the application guidelines for this fiscal year have not changed.

The essence of the International Grant Program is, as it has been from before, to support proposed projects that are aimed at solving common issues in Asia through learning from each other and include the following four elements.

(1) Transnationality: The project must cover at least two countries in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and South Asia, and the project members must also be from at least two countries. In addition, any achievement made through the project or an effect produced by it must cover multiple countries.

(2) Cross Sectoral Approach: A sufficient number of experts from multiple sectors (such as researchers, NPO staff, businesspersons, and government officials), who are to solve the problem, must be participating in the project under an organic relationship.

(3) Mutual Learning: Project participants must have built a relationship of mutual learning to carry out the project.

(4) Foresight: The project must have a clear vision of its outcomes and must consider the impact it will have after the end of the grant and the possibility of its future development. It must also cover problems that could occur in the future and reflect a new perspective beyond conventional frameworks.

Overview of the Situation and Details of Application

The open call for proposals started on April 3 in fiscal 2023, and applications were accepted for about two months until June 3. The Foundation held two online briefing sessions, one on April 12 and the other on April 18, and nearly 100 people participated in the sessions. Fifty-seven prior consultations were provided face-to-face, online or in other forms. We had 267 pre-application registrations and 122 of these (45.7%) advanced to the final application process. We saw

improvements since 40.5% of pre-registrants advanced to the final application process last year. Also, we had 24 more applications than the 98 we received in fiscal 2022.

Nine of the 122 applications were for the One-Year Grant. This was only a little higher than 7% of the whole. This means there was a significant drop in applications for the One-Year Grant as they were 17.3% of the awarded grants last fiscal year. This is another example showing that the COVID-19 pandemic is almost over.

The distribution of nationalities of applicants is shown in Table 1. In fiscal 2022, a little more than 62% of all applicants were Japanese nationals, while in FY2023, the percentage was a little lower than 70%, returning to the normal level. This is the second year since the program began to cover South Asia, and partly because of this, citizens of countries such as India and Bangladesh were more of the applicants while the number of applicants from the United States and Vietnam decreased. The total number of applications increased from last year, which can be attributable to our receiving more applications from people with Japanese citizenship.

Fig. 1 shows the distribution of countries/regions stated in the proposed projects and Fig. 2 shows the number of the countries/regions covered by the project.

More projects covered Southeast Asian countries like Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia and the Philippines than last year. On the other hand, the number of projects covering Taiwan, South Korea and China decreased slightly. Overall, coverage of East Asia is less than before. This year, we had more proposals than in the past for projects that cover fewer countries or regions. It seems many of the proposals intended to start their project from a small scale due to the suspension of the project during the pandemic.

Selection process and results

The selection committee is made up of four members including the committee chair. The members remain unchanged from last year. For this reason, we were always able to keep the comparison with the previous year in mind during the

Table 1: Distribution of the nationalities of project representatives for fiscal 2022-2023

Nationality	2022	2023
Japan	61	85
India	3	6
Malaysia	4	4
Bangladesh	2	4
The Philippines	0	3
Indonesia	5	3
China	1	3
United States	6	2
South Korea	1	2
Vietnam	4	1
Nepal	2	1
Thailand	1	1
Taiwan	1	1
Burkina Faso	0	1
Hong Kong	0	1
New Zealand	0	1
Pakistan	0	1
Austria	0	1
Canada	0	1
United Kingdom	2	0
Singapore	2	0
Czech Republic	1	0
Italy	1	0
Iran	1	0

Note: Countries/regions are listed in descending order of number of project representatives by nationality for fiscal 2023.

selection process.

First, program officers (POs) sorted out submitted documents and closely reviewed the 122 applications. They eliminated incomplete application forms and applications that were judged to not include the four elements described above, before the selection committee was asked to evaluate the remaining applications. (For example, as Fig. 2 shows, four applications in fiscal 2023 covered only one country and were treated as outside the scope of the evaluation.)

The four members of the selection committee read the applications carefully and selected the applications that they could recommend, with some weight on the projects that the committee members found most impressive. When a question arose about project details, schedule, budget plans or any other related matters, or room for improvement was found in the dissemination of achievements and results, the selection committee members informed the POs, who directed the questions/concerns to the applicants and communicated their replies to members of the selection committee. Then, the results of the reviews by the four selection committee members were collated before the selection committee meeting was held.

The committee eliminated applications that had not been recommended by anyone. All members of the selection committee commented on each of the applications that at least one of the members had recommended, and examined the replies from the applicants before discussing the applications individually and deciding whether to select them. They made the final decision on the winning projects by checking for the overlap in the countries or regions covered and project themes and adjusting the amounts of grants to 70,000,000 yen in total.

The eight projects selected for this fiscal year have the following characteristics.

First, all eight of the winning projects are for the Two-Year Grant, and none were selected from applications for the One-Year Grant. In my commentary on the selection results for fiscal 2021, I pointed out that the applications for the Two-Year Grants conveyed more enthusiasm and many of them delivered a strong message like, "A project like this is all the more necessary because we are in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic." A similar trend was seen this fiscal year as well.

Second, the total number of countries or regions covered by the winning projects is smaller than before. As Fig. 3 shows, 52.5% of all proposed projects covered two countries, while 62.5% of the selected projects covered two countries, which is up 10 percentage points. None of the selected applications covered four or more countries. In that regard, this fiscal year is slightly different from past years.

Third, past recipients of grants from the Toyota Foundation have always been a relatively large proportion of the successful applicants, but that is not true this fiscal year. Thirty-four of the 122 applicants had been previously selected by the Foundation, which is 28% of the all applicants. However, two of the eight selected applicants (25%) had been selected before, showing a minor difference from the overall trend.

The problems common throughout Asia addressed by the selected projects included environmental issues and the aging population. This fiscal year, we received more proposals related to disaster prevention and control and fewer proposals related to immigration. The latter may be because more candidates applied for another Foundation program on a Special Subject, "Migrants and Japanese Society" or because the immigrant issue has entered a different phase now that the pandemic is settling.

While nine applications were selected last fiscal year, eight were selected this time. Thus, there was an increase in the amount granted per selected application.

Introducing Adopted Projects

Two of this fiscal year's winning projects which were highly evaluated by the selection committee members are introduced below.

D23-N-0040 Kazuo Koyama (Japan Bird Research Association)

"Sustainable Coffee in Asia Connected by Migratory Birds - A Project to Promote Sustainable Coffee in Two Southeast Asian Countries by Environmental Assessment Methods Using Birds as Indicators"
Countries: The Philippines and Indonesia

With a focus on wild birds that have no borders, the project brands the coffee produced in the covered regions by simultaneously conducting environmental assessment using the wild birds as an index and wild bird research, in an effort to conserve the forest. The proposer who specializes in wild bird observation seeks to achieve its targets by cooperat-

Fig. 1: Targeted countries/regions that were stated in application forms for fiscal 2022- 2023

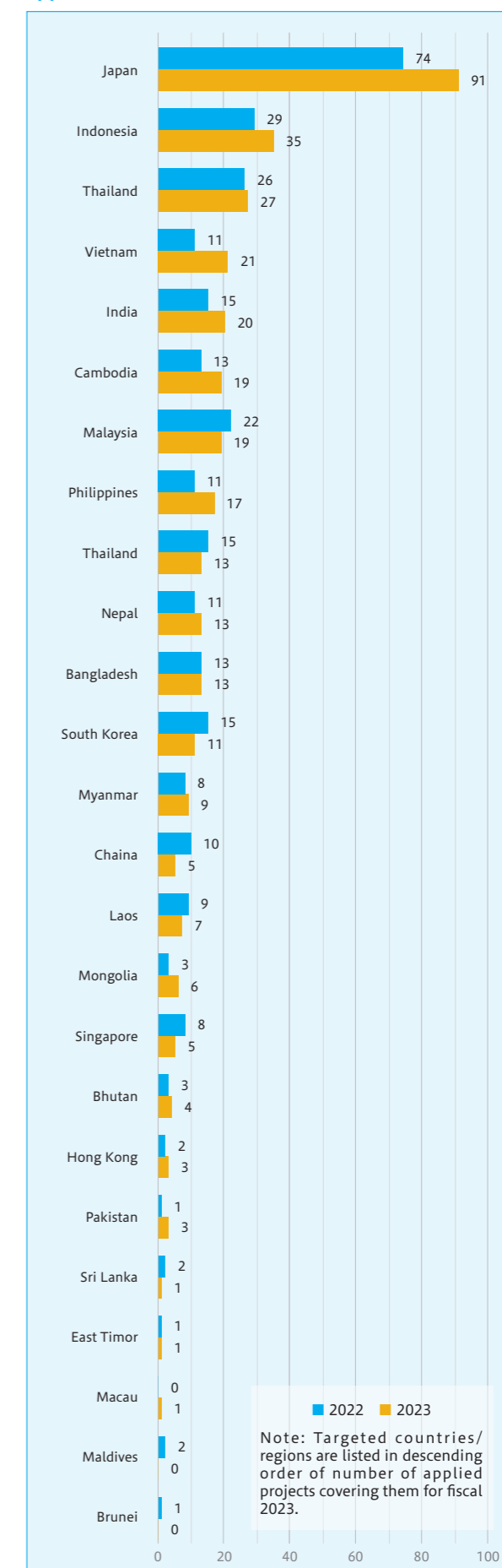


Fig. 2: Number of targeted countries/regions that were stated in application forms in 2022-2023

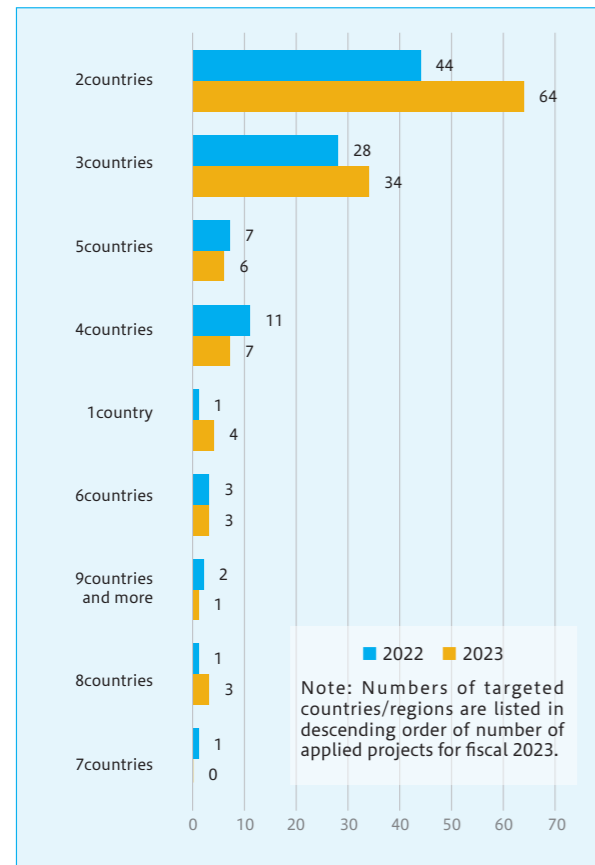
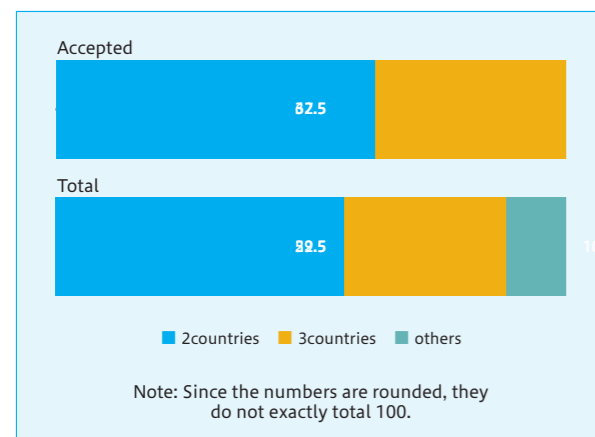


Fig. 3: Numbers of targeted countries/regions that were stated in the applications: Ratios to the number of selected projects and the total number of applications (%)



ing with NGOs and public officials in the Philippines and Indonesia and Japanese coffee importers. The proposal was highly regarded for its novel idea and solid preparation for the implementation of the project. Going forward, we expect the impact of the project will be increased by concentrating on branding the coffee in the regions.

D23-N-0061 Keiko Azuma (Double care support Association)

“Supporting Carers in Japan and Korea: Supporting Double Carers and Young Carers and Learning from Each Other towards Caring Democracy and Local Communities”

Countries: Japan and South Korea

Leveraging an established track record and network created by the project selected in the fiscal 2015 International Grant Program, “Proposing Supports for People Confronting Double Responsibility of Care,” this new project focuses on mutual learning in Japan and Korea which was not expanded full scale in the previous project, especially learning from cases in Korea where there has been an accumulation of gender-related legislation. Because this is a serious issue for Japan, the selection committee members were strongly interested in the project which introduced the term “double care” to the general public in Japan. The applicants have actively continued awareness-raising activities and our expectations for the applicants’ collaboration with Korea is high.

Conclusion

In recent years, the International Grant Program has often implemented minor changes such as the revision of application (applicant) requirements and the increase of the number of countries covered., but no changes have been implemented since the previous fiscal year. Furthermore, all of the members of last year’s selection committee stayed, which made it easier for us to focus on the changes to the contents of the application.

We received fewer proposals for academia-led projects (led by university professors) but more proposals for practitioner-led projects (led by NGO-related people and others) than before. Possibly because of this, the committee members who are familiar with the latter had severe comments on some projects, pointing out the lack of novelty in this fiscal year’s proposals and an overall lack of appeal. Meanwhile, other committee members who are well-versed in the former had different ideas. They viewed many proposals from people involved in NGOs as solid and highly feasible in a more positive sense.

It’s good news that we received more applications than in previous fiscal years, but this is meaningless if they are not of good quality. Increasing the appeal of proposals might require a new program that teaches how to write the application form properly. The Foundation may have entered a stage where this kind of new program will be developed to reach potential applicants.

List of Grants

*Note: The project titles among other things on this list are those at the time of grant approval.

Grant Number	Project Title Project Leader Position, Organization	Grant Amount(Yen)
D23-N-0016	Development and Implementation of Capacity Building Program for Child and Family Welfare Social Workers in Cambodia and Vietnam Mariko Kimura, Association for International Social Work	8,500,000
D23-N-0025	Mutual Learning and Sharing Experiences for Enhancing "Community Capacity" through Community Based Tourism: Insights from Toei-Cho, Aichi Prefecture, and Nam Giang District, Quang Nam Province Hitomi Suzuki, Research Institute for Regional Planning & Development	8,700,000
D23-N-0040	Sustainable Coffee in Asia Connected by Migratory Birds - A Project to Promote Sustainable Coffee in Two Southeast Asian Countries by Environmental Assessment Methods Using Birds as Indicators Koyama Kazuo, Japan Bird Research Association	8,600,000
D23-N-0056	Joint Development of Citizen Empowerment Program for Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia Yasuo Kawawaki, Kansai University of International Studies	8,700,000
D23-N-0061	Supporting Carers in Japan and Korea: Supporting Double Carers and Young Carers and Learning from Each Other towards Caring Democracy and Local Communities Keiko Azuma, Double care support Association	9,300,000
D23-N-0089	Designer residence program for building relationships of mutual circulation Mikiharu Yabe, Agent Hamyak Inc.	8,500,000
D23-N-0092	Building a platform for mutual-learning and supporting social entrepreneurs, connecting Japan, India and Cambodia, with an ultimate goal of creating an empowering social investment community Satoko Kono, ARUN Seed	9,000,000
D23-N-0100	Mutual Learning Project for Emergency Medical Care through Multinational Joint Training in Countries Prone to Natural Disasters Mototaka Inaba, Peace Winds Japan	8,700,000



A scene of an event held in the city of Ebetsu, Hokkaido, as part of the fiscal 2022 grant-awarded project (representative Dr. Miki Hirata) titled "Building grassroots intercultural policy proposals by and for residents through Japan."

The Grant Program for Community Activities in Japan

Overview

Program Title

Fostering the Autonomous Society under "New Normal" Based upon the Inventive Ideas

*This program is limited to activities in Japan.

Grant Category

1) Inventing Systems and Development of Human Resources Conducive to Foster Autonomous Society in Japan

2) Building the Base to Foster Autonomy in Local Neighborhoods

Call for Proposals

April 6 to June 6, 2023

Project Period

1) Three years, beginning November 1, 2023

2) Two years, beginning November 1, 2023

Total Amount of Grants

1) Up to 10 to 20 million yen per project

2) Up to around six million yen

In fiscal 2023, the Toyota Foundation made grants for the third year in the two grant frameworks of "(1) Creating a System that Can Contribute to Greater Promotion of Autonomous Society in Japan and Developing Human Resources" (hereinafter (1) Japanese Society) and "(2) Building a Capacity for Promoting Autonomy in Local Neighborhoods" (hereinafter (2) Local Neighborhoods) under the theme of "Fostering the Autonomous Society under 'New Normal' Based Upon the Inventive Idea," a new theme introduced in fiscal 2021.

In this fiscal year, the TF worked to communicate information about the purposes and focal points of the program -- "Implementation under a system for ensuring cooperation among various actors and across various sectors," "Devising strategies with focus on sustainability after the end of the grant," and "Disseminating and sharing insights

Grant Results () Fiscal 2022

	Number of Applications	Number of Grants	Value of Grants (¥ Million)	Budget (¥ Million)	Acceptance Rate (%)
1)	34(30)	1(3)	19.50(57.27)	70.0	2.9(10.0)
2)	114(107)	8(8)	43.20(39.49)	40.0	7.0(7.5)
Total	148(137)	9(11)	62.70(96.76)	110.0	6.0(8.0)

gained through the project.”

As for publica calling for proposals, online briefing sessions were held four times, along with other sessions, particularly focused on the (2) Local Neighborhoods framework, held in collaboration with local NPO support/intermediary organizations in Tokyo, Hyogo, Miyazaki, and Okinawa prefectures. In addition, information sessions incorporating grant-based lectures, as requested by external organizations, were conducted in Tokyo and Kagawa prefectures. At the online briefing sessions, the TF explained about the overall program including details of the two grant frameworks, and conducted group work activities and individual consultations at other sessions in order to focus on direct communication with participants.

Upon closing the application period, a total of 148 proposals was received: 34 proposals for (1) Japanese Society and 114 proposals for (2) Local Neighborhoods, an increase of 11 proposals from the levels in fiscal 2022. Nevertheless, the Selection Committee held a discussion based on the assessment of each proposal’s presentation, and concluded that the majority of the proposals failed to meet the expectation and the required threshold of the (1) Japanese Society framework. In the end, only one project was selected for the grant framework (1), along with eight projects selected for the (2) Local Neighborhoods. As a result, the TF decided to make grants worth a total of 62.70 million yen to a total of nine projects.

In this fiscal year, too, the Foundation held various in-person gatherings particularly for exchanges and networking, such as follow-up operations and report-back meetings for the grant-awarded projects. To solidify a grantee alumni network, two alumni-activities were conducted for sharing the outcomes and insights of the projects among the past grant recipients and facilitating exchanges and collaboration among them. The first activity was mainly about reporting on cases and discussions by the Selection Committee members, grant recipients, and outside experts, and the other one was about an excursion to areas of activity or project sites of grant recipients by all the partici-

pants, which was very well received in the previous fiscal year.

As for assessing the grant programs conducted between fiscal 2014 and fiscal 2020, the Foundation conducted analysis further through a questionnaire and additional hearing survey in collaboration with outside experts, and carried out on-site interviews about several projects that were considered good cases. Five years or so already passed since the end of the grant for most of these projects, and as a result some signs of change and impacts were observed in local communities and among the people concerned. It was interesting to see deeper and richer effects than immediately after the grant period ended.



A scene of a discussion among participants from the grant-awarded project in fiscal 2023 (representative Dr. Masanari Kimura) titled “Revitalizing Local Communities through Supporting Local Connections using ICT.”

The Initiative Program

Overview

As a private grant-making organization, the Toyota Foundation provides grants to projects deemed worthy of support and/or to projects aimed at disseminating and spreading the outcomes of the past grant-awarded projects to society.

In this fiscal year, the Foundation made grants to a research project on demographic analysis for overall mea-

asures against falling birthrates in local communities and response measures, and it also provided grants to a program for nurturing learning innovators who can help provide mutually learning opportunities or “socialization of education,” a support project aimed at reviving and revitalizing local community organizations, and a practical and empirical research about work style reform in school environments.

List of Grants

*Note: The project titles among other things on this list are those at the time of grant approval.

Grant Number	Project Title Representative Organization	Grant Amount(Yen)
D23-PI-0001	Research Project on Population Trend Analysis and Countermeasures for Planning and Implementing Comprehensive Measures to Improve Declining Birthrate in Local Areas Ryoko Tsuji , Researcher in Hokkaido Intellect Tank (HIT)	11,900,000
D23-PI-0002	A learning innovator program aimed at providing local communities with mutually learning opportunities for “socialization of education” by various sectors. Saya Yukimoto, NPO Glocal Human Resources Development Center	11,630,000
D23-PI-0003	Revitalizing local communities through supporting local connections by leveraging ICT Masanari Kimura, Integrated Science and Technology, Nagasaki University	12,000,000
D23-PI-0004	Practical & Empirical Research on Work style Reform by Cooperating with Schools Hayao Nmura, Educational Profession Career Center, Akita University	5,610,000

Accounting Report

Balance Sheet

As of March 31, 2024

(Unit: Thousand Yen)

Account	Fiscal 2023	Fiscal 2022	Fiscal 2021
I Assets			
1. Current assets			
Cash and deposits	576,352	470,822	446,736
Accounts receivable	70,557	63,248	68,183
Other	12,684	4,754	5,726
Total current assets	659,593	538,824	520,645
2. Fixed assets			
Basic funds	25,567,792	24,122,031	25,167,457
Specified assets	30,519,515	18,354,569	20,859,206
Other fixed assets	50,941	51,984	53,027
Total fixed assets	56,138,248	42,528,584	46,079,690
Total assets	56,797,841	43,067,408	46,600,335
II Liabilities			
1. Total current liabilities	476,514	430,170	386,232
2. Total fixed liabilities	53,840	74,826	66,869
Total liabilities	530,355	504,996	453,101
III Net assets			
1. Designated net assets	33,366,311	21,201,448	23,715,084
(Amount from above allocated to basic funds)	(3,000,000)	(3,000,000)	(3,000,000)
(Amount from above allocated to specified assets)	(30,366,311)	(18,201,448)	(20,715,084)
2. General net assets	22,901,175	21,360,964	22,432,150
(Amount from above allocated to basic funds)	(22,567,792)	(21,360,964)	(22,167,457)
(Amount from above allocated to specified assets)	(100,000)	(80,000)	(80,000)
Total net assets	56,267,486	42,562,412	46,147,234
Total liabilities and net assets	56,797,841	43,067,408	46,600,335

Accounting Report

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

(Unit: Thousand Yen)

Account	Fiscal 2023	Fiscal 2022	Fiscal 2021
I Changes in general net assets			
1. Changes in ordinary profit			
(1) Ordinary profit	806,026	693,080	688,769
(2) Ordinary expenses	712,876	719,182	695,870
Current changes in ordinary profit prior to profit/loss appraisal	93,150	▲26,102	▲7,101
Profit and loss appraisal	1,447,061	▲1,045,083	24,334
Current changes in ordinary profit	1,540,211	▲1,071,186	17,233
2. Changes in extraordinary profit			
(1) Extraordinary profit	0	0	0
(2) Extraordinary expenses	0	0	0
Current changes in extraordinary profit	0	0	0
Current changes in general net assets	1,540,211	▲1,071,186	17,233
Balance at beginning of the fiscal year in general net assets	21,360,964	22,432,150	22,414,917
Balance at end of the fiscal year in general net assets	22,901,175	21,360,964	22,432,150
II Changes in designated net assets			
Current changes in designated net assets	12,164,863	▲2,513,635	2,985,515
Balance at beginning of the fiscal year in designated net assets	21,201,448	23,715,084	20,729,569
Balance at end of the fiscal year in designated net assets	33,366,311	21,201,448	23,715,084
III Balance at end of the fiscal year in net assets	56,267,486	42,562,412	46,147,234

Officers and Trustees

Directors and Auditors

As of March 31, 2024

Name	Occupation
Chairman Nobuyori Kodaira	Former Executive Vice President, Toyota Motor Corp.
President Masashi Haneda	Director, Tokyo College, The Uni- versity of Tokyo
Managing Director (full-time) Akihiro Yamamoto	
Director Jyunichi Sato	Adviser, The Japan Federation of Engineering Societies
Director Atsushi Seike	President, Japanese Red Cross So- ciety Adviser for Educational Affairs, Keio University
Director Kumiko Bando	Former Commissioner, Consumer Affairs Agency
Director Kanetaka Hisatsune	Former Chairman, Toyota Dealers Association
Director Hiroshi Yoshikawa	Honorary President, Policy Re- search Institute, Ministry of Fi- nance, Japan
Auditor Masahide Yasuda	Audit and Supervisory Board Members, Toyota Motor Corp.
Auditor Fusahiro Yamamoto	Certified Public Accountant

Trustees

As of March 31, 2024

Name	Occupation
Yuko Arimori	Former Chairman, Special Olympics Nippon
Kyota Omori	Special Advisor, Mitsubishi Research Institute, Inc.
Shinichi Kitaoka	Special Advisor, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)
Nobuyuki Koga	Honorary Advisor, Nomura Holdings, Inc.
Hiroyuki Sakaki	President, Nara National Higher Education and Research System / Fellow, Toyota School
Kenichiro Sasae	President, The Japan Institute of International Affairs
Michinari Hamaguchi	Director General, Strategic Center of Biomedical Advanced Vaccine Research and Development for Preparedness and Response (SCARDA), Japan Agency for Medical Research and Development
Shigeru Hayakawa	Vice Chairman, Toyota Motor Corp.
Kayoko Hayashi	President, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies
Naoko Munakata	Professor, Graduate School of Public Policy, The University of Tokyo



Chairman: Nobuyori Kodaira
President: Haneda Masashi
Founded: October 15, 1974

Shinjuku Mitsui Building 37F, 2-1-1 Nishi-Shinjuku,
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 163-0437, Japan
Tel: +81-3-3344-1701 Fax: +81-3-3342-6911
<https://www.toyotafound.or.jp/english/>

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Translated by Naoto Okamura



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