

Associate Declaration
~Japanese Society, Now and To Be~

The number of foreign residents in Japan is rising and due to this change, it is important to address current issues in the education provided to foreign children.

Internationally

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights' International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (adopted 1966) states in Article 27, "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language." In addition, the 1989 UN General Assembly's Convention on the Rights of the Child, which Japan ratified in 1994, Article 30 contains the same content about the applying these rights to children belong to minorities.

Domestically

Currently in Japan, however, the Japanese public education system is only oriented towards native Japanese. The educational rights of foreign residents are being largely ignored, which parts from the intended target of compulsory education. Current government educational guidelines do not account for foreign students and are far from meeting acceptable international standards. It is therefore necessary to fundamentally reexamine the role of education in this country.

What is Necessary

It is urgent that steps are taken in order to better education for foreign children living in Japan. First, research must be conducted to reveal the educational environment for children of foreigners; we ought to strive to create suitable and welcoming communities for these children. In addition to allowing proper enrollment in public schools and assisting those currently not enrolled to reenter school, foreign children must receive appropriate support before beginning compulsory education. Moreover, foreign children must have access to substantial Japanese language study and guidance programs along with being taught methods to preserve their native language and customs. Finally, plans need to be established to strengthen international schools with financial support.

Our Declaration

As we aspire for a more multicultural society, each one of us must take a serious approach toward this reality. Japanese children along with children from differing countries and cultures can mutually benefit through linguistic and cultural exchange, fostering a richer society, and further contributing to a robust international community. It is our declaration to take proactive steps to properly address these urgent problems and move closer toward the vision of a strong, multicultural society.

August 28th 2010

“Education for Multilingual and Multicultural Society”

2010 Summer Symposium

Sponsor: Tokiwa Institute for Teacher Education