

The Japan Foundation has long supported Japanese-language education in various countries with a view to encouraging its localization and independence overseas. Today there are a total of 2.98 million Japanese-language learners in 133 countries and regions. An increasing number of countries are expected to introduce Japanese-language education in the years to come, and the needs of language learners are bound to grow more diverse. While maintaining the tradition of encouraging localization and independence in planning and implementing programs, the Japan Foundation now finds it essential to adopt a strategy allowing us to select and focus on specific fields that make the most of our experience and knowledge.

Specifically, in order to insure a steady increase in the number of countries and regions teaching Japanese and the number of Japanese-language learners and to achieve qualitative improvement in Japanese-language education overseas, the Japan Foundation will conduct its programs, while adapting them to the needs of each country or region, according to the following guidelines.

The Japan Foundation Policy Statements for Japanese-Language Program

Promotion of the Japanese Language According to the Developmental Stage and Learning Environments of Different Countries and Regions

In accordance with the spread of Japanese language in individual countries and regions, the Japan Foundation will provide focused support for the following important phases:

Founding of Japanese-language programs in institutions of higher education

Providing comprehensive support for the founding of Japanese-language departments in universities where they are not already established in order to better enable students to major in Japanese in those countries and regions.

Targeting universities capable of drawing up mid- and long-term plans insuring the future operation of a department by local Japanese-language teachers.

Introducing and promoting the Japanese language as a subject in secondary education

In those countries and regions where the Japanese language is newly introduced as a school subject or where the Japanese language has already been offered in some areas and its teaching as a school subject is planned to spread nationwide, in cooperation with the local government, the Japan Foundation will provide support in the form of the production of teaching materials, teacher training, and so forth, in cases where there is a feasible plan to achieve eventual independence in teacher training and the production of teaching materials.

Promotion of ripple-effect type programs in countries and regions that have achieved a certain level of independence in Japanese-language education

The Japan Foundation provides support in such a manner that leading Japanese-language institutions in individual countries and regions will be able to function on their own as hubs of national or regional Japanese-language education networks.

Building the Infrastructure for Further Internationalization of the Japanese Language

The following programs will be implemented to provide a basis for Japanese-language education overseas.

Development and promotion of “The Standard for Japanese-Language Education”

Developing and promoting methods of teaching and learning Japanese language for outcomes that may be evaluated in an internationally comparable manner, corresponding to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

Expanding of the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test

The Japanese-Language Proficiency Test, which was conducted twice in fiscal 2009 in some countries and regions, will continue to be held twice a year. Starting in 2010, a new and revised examination will be introduced.

Support of distance education and distance teaching

Broadcasting overseas audio-visual teaching resources and the development and improvement of websites for learning assistance and for the support of Japanese-language teachers will be facilitated as effective promotional methods functioning in different ways from ordinary face-to-face teaching/learning.