

6. Central America

Status of Japanese-language education in Central America

In Central America overall the number of institutions is 180 institutions (up 7.1%), the number of teachers is 765 people (up 19.2%), and the number of learners is 17,562 people (up 1.1%), so all items saw a further increase from the previous (fiscal 2018) survey, when large increases were recorded across the board.

Mexico accounts for a high percentage of all of the survey items, with 77.2% of the number of institutions, 80.0% of the number of teachers, and 82.9% of the number of learners.

Comparing the results for each country to the previous survey, in Mexico all items continued to increase from the previous survey, with the number of institutions up 15.8%, the number of teachers up 26.7%, and the number of learners up 6.4%, and Puerto Rico also recorded increases across the board. On the other hand, the numbers in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Belize, and Honduras decreased.

Regarding the number of learners, looking at the percentage by educational stage, primary education is 3.5%, secondary education is 7.0%, higher education is 14.7%, and non-school education is 74.8%, so the

category of non-school education accounts for the highest percentage, and following the increase of 17.4 points in the previous survey from the survey before last (fiscal 2015), non-school education has gained another 11.5 points from the 63.3% recorded in the previous (fiscal 2018) survey.

As for the online class implementation ratio, Mexico, which has the largest number of institutions, was 92.8%, and although the number of institutions is small in other countries and regions, almost all of them had a 100% implementation ratio, resulting in the very high ratio of 93.9% for Central America overall.

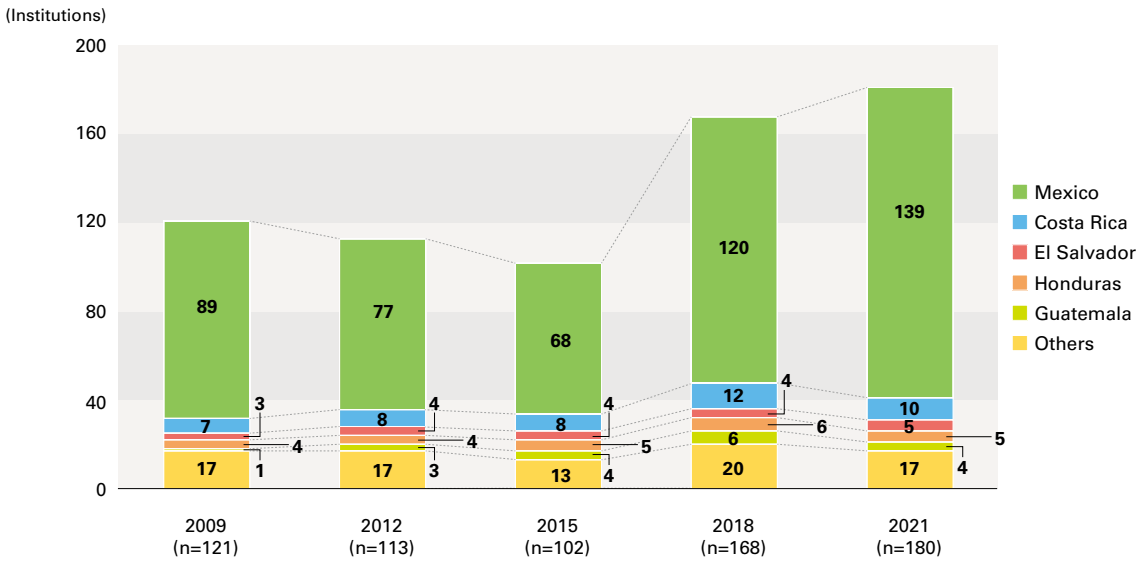
Turning to the objectives for Japanese-language learning, the top two responses, “interest in anime, manga, J-POP, fashion, etc.” (90.6%) and “interest in the Japanese language” (86.7%) were given by a very high percentage of respondents compared to the world overall. The next most-popular response was “current or future work in home country” (85.0%), with percentages for other items also similar to or higher than the global response rates, indicating that people are pursuing Japanese-language study in Central America for a wide variety of reasons.

Table 2-6-1 Number of institutions, number of teachers, and number of learners in Central America (Listed in order of the number of learners in 2021)

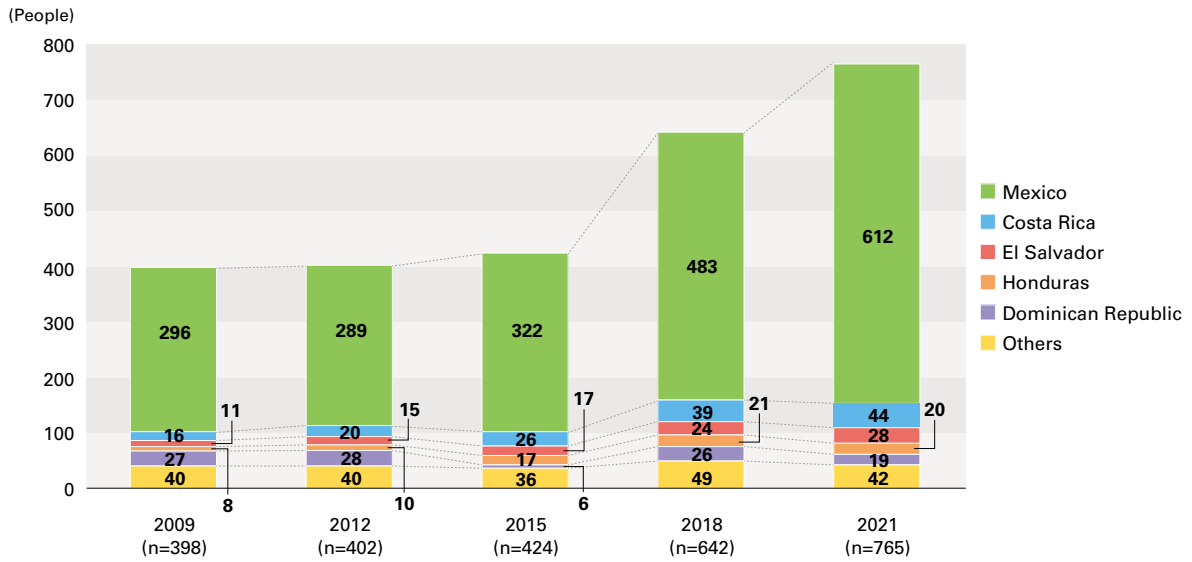
Country and region	2021									Population* (People)	2018		
	Institutions (Institutions)	Teachers (People)	Learners (People)	Learners per 100,000 population (People)	Composition by educational stage (Learners) (People)				Institutions (Institutions)		Teachers (People)	Learners (People)	
					Primary education	Secondary education	Higher education	Non-school education					
Mexico	139	612	14,552	11.5	588	1,145	2,103	10,716	126,014,024	120	483	13,673	
Costa Rica	10	44	829	19.3	0	0	0	829	4,301,712	12	39	892	
Guatemala	4	12	414	3.7	0	0	0	414	11,237,196	6	10	333	
El Salvador	5	28	387	6.7	0	0	63	324	5,744,113	4	24	424	
Honduras	5	20	355	4.3	21	21	27	286	8,303,771	6	21	492	
Jamaica	3	5	213	7.9	0	0	153	60	2,697,983	3	5	217	
Dominican Republic	3	19	175	1.9	0	0	0	175	9,445,281	4	26	227	
Trinidad and Tobago	1	2	150	11.3	0	0	3	147	1,332,901	1	3	170	
Panama	3	6	140	4.1	0	15	25	100	3,405,813	3	6	132	
Puerto Rico	2	2	139	4.2	0	0	121	18	3,285,874	1	1	50	
Haiti	1	4	108	1.3	0	54	54	0	8,373,750	1	4	36	
Nicaragua	2	7	62	1.2	0	0	0	62	5,142,098	1	7	120	
Cuba	1	2	28	0.3	0	0	28	0	11,167,325	4	10	574	
Belize	1	2	10	3.1	0	0	0	10	322,453	2	3	27	
Central America overall	180	765	17,562	-	609	1,235	2,577	13,141	-	168	642	17,367	

*Source: *Population and Vital Statistics Report (as of 3 June 2022)*, by United Nations

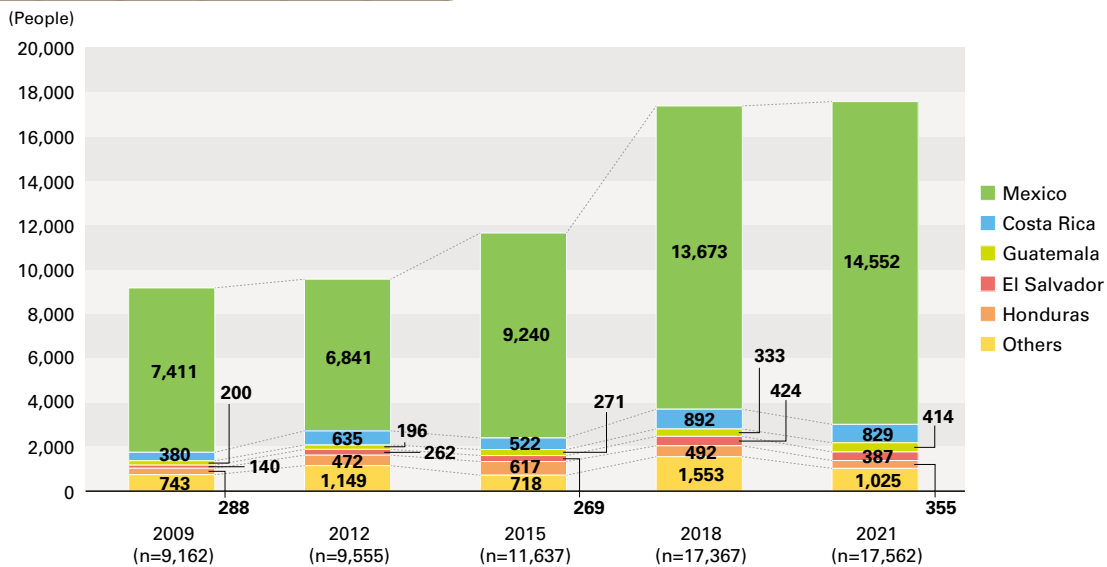
Graph 2-6-1 Number of institutions in Central America



Graph 2-6-2 Number of teachers in Central America



Graph 2-6-3 Number of learners in Central America



Graph 2-6-4 Percentages of learners by educational stage in Central America

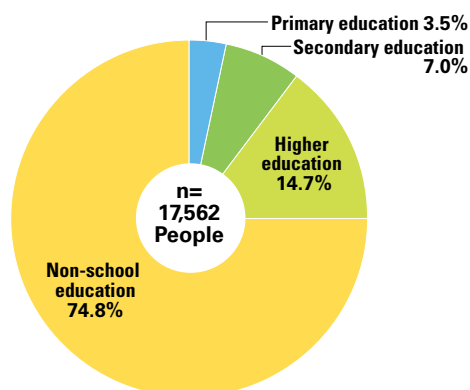
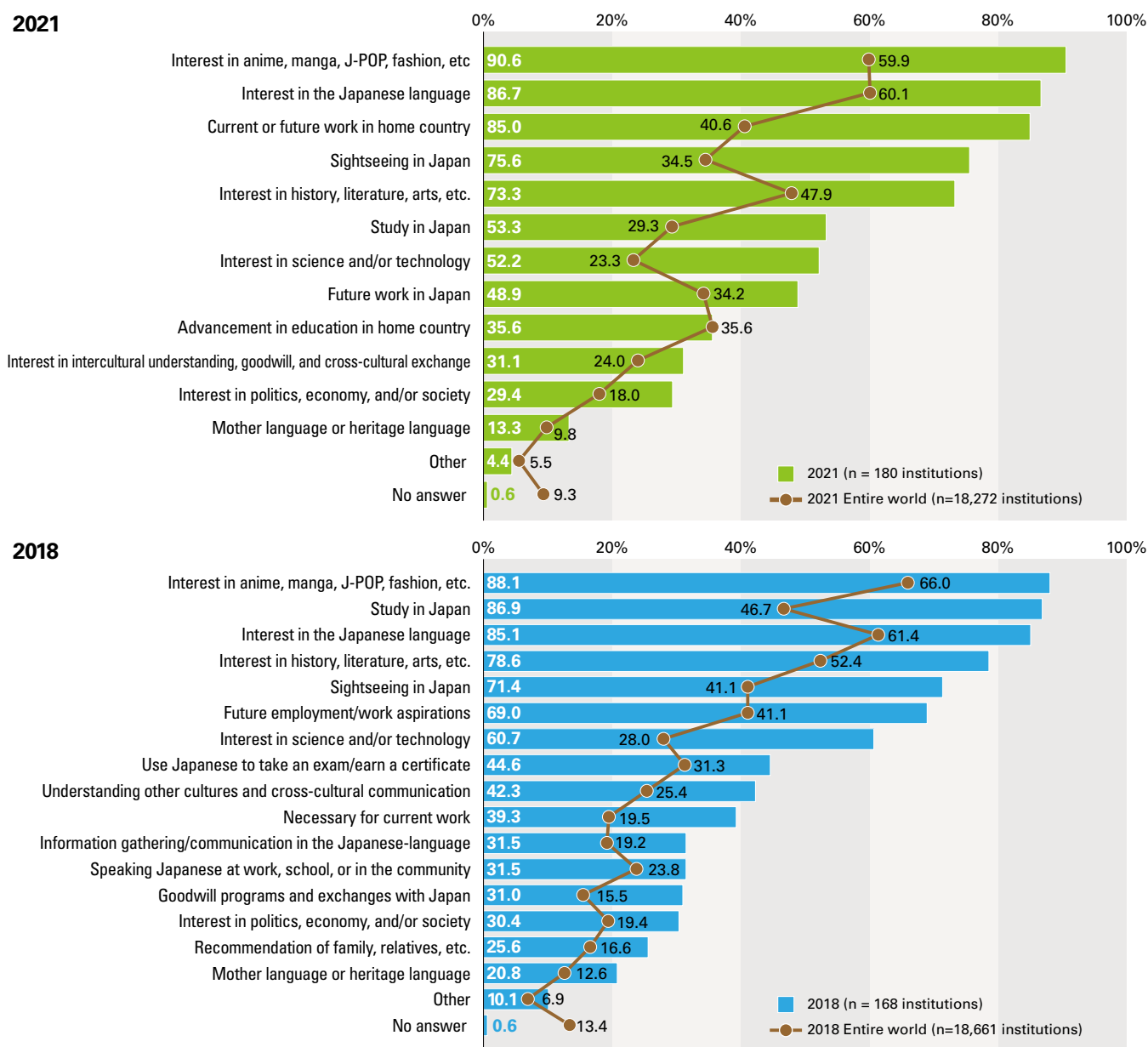


Table 2-6-2 Online class implementation ratio in Central America

Country and region	Total number of institutions in the country and region	Online class implementation	
		(Institutions)	(%)
Mexico	139	129	92.8
Costa Rica	10	10	100.0
El Salvador	5	5	100.0
Honduras	5	5	100.0
Guatemala	4	4	100.0
Jamaica	3	3	100.0
Dominican Republic	3	3	100.0
Panama	3	3	100.0
Nicaragua	2	2	100.0
Puerto Rico	2	2	100.0
Cuba	1	1	100.0
Trinidad and Tobago	1	1	100.0
Haiti	1	0	0.0
Belize	1	1	100.0
Central America overall	180	169	93.9

Graph 2-6-5 Objectives of Japanese-language learning in Central America



Trends in each country and region

[Mexico]

In Mexico, the country where the scale of Japanese-language education is the largest in the Central America region, the number of institutions, teachers, and learners have all grown steadily, in particular in the category of non-school education. Because the number of learners decreased in most of the other educational stages, the percentage accounted for by this category in Mexico overall has grown even larger, with 85.6% of the total number of institutions (73.3% in the previous survey), 88.1% of the total number of teachers (81.0% in the previous survey), and 73.6% of the total number of learners (59.8% in the previous survey). Meanwhile, the percentage of Japanese-language teachers who are non-native speakers continues to rise, going from 49.7% in the survey before last and 56.3% in the previous survey to 67.8%.

In higher education, the number of institutions has decreased by 17 since the previous survey, falling from 40 to 23 institutions. Of these, 11 institutions, equivalent to approximately 65%, responded that “classes are temporarily suspended.” Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, some institutions were forced to temporarily suspend classes due to the technical or financial difficulties involved in switching to online classes, and in some cases, classes were not offered because there were no longer enough students based on the stricter requirements for holding classes. Meanwhile, some students who returned to their homes in rural areas due to university closures gave up on taking online classes because of the undeveloped IT infrastructure in the areas where they live, while some decided not to take classes because of negativity toward online courses (based on issues with maintaining focus, the inability to interact directly with teachers and classmates, and so on).

Looking at the situation by state and region, the capital of Mexico City has the largest number of institutions, teachers, and learners, with each accounting for 20 to 30% of the total numbers in the country overall. Furthermore, if these figures are combined with those for the state of Mexico as the “Mexico City metropolitan area,” the area accounts for 29.5% of the total number of institutions in the country overall, 33.5% of the number of teachers, and 40.9% of the number of learners. The next-largest area for Japanese-language education is the Bajío region (the central highlands region of Mexico, where many Japanese companies have entered, primarily in automobile-related manufacturing industries), accounting for 34.5%, 34.6%, and 26.1% of the number of institutions, teachers, and learners in the country overall, respectively. The Mexico City metropolitan area and the Bajío region alone account for around 70% of Japanese-language education in Mexico overall.

In March 2020, the Mexican Secretariat of Public Education closed all schools simultaneously, including universities, for one month as a measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19 infections (about 250,000 schools nationwide, including private universities, with around 33 million students and pupils). Almost all institutions, including kindergartens and private-sector language schools, switched to online classes, and some Japanese-language institutions that specialize in online classes have also emerged, but as there have been issues including the IT infrastructure, as of fiscal 2021 many institutions have shifted to a hybrid format combining online and in-person classes, and some have reverted completely to in-person instruction.

The spreadsheets for survey results by state (1-3a and 1-3b) are available on the Japan Foundation website.