

Report on the EDU-Port Symposium FY2025

On Friday February 27, 2026, the EDU-Port Symposium “Achievements of EDU-Port and the Launch of New Initiatives” was held in the auditorium of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

The EDU-Port Symposium is held annually as a forum that brings together in one place parties involved in education, including relevant government ministries, government-related bodies, universities, education businesses and NGOs/NPOs, to discuss the outcomes of activities and future developments.



This year’s Symposium looked back on the progress of EDU-Port Japan over the past ten years, reported on the findings of research projects concerning its impact on the internationalization and qualitative improvement of education in Japan, as well as the development of Japanese-style education in Africa. The Symposium also shared information on the direction of the next phase of EDU-Port Japan, “Establishment of an International Education Program Originating in Japan”; and views were exchanged on Japanese-style education - characterized by a holistic approach that fosters a balanced development of Solid academic ability, Richness in mind, Healthy body - as well as on non-cognitive skills, whose importance has been increasingly emphasized internationally. Discussions were held from such perspectives as how these concepts connect with international educational discourse and how they are positioned within the education policies of individual countries. Following the plenary session, the organizations implementing this fiscal year’s EDU-Port Japan-adapted Projects held poster presentations introducing the specific initiatives and achievements in each country. Some 300 participants from Japan and overseas attended the Symposium, either in person or online. The Symposium this year was also attended by many attaches for education and technology from various embassies in Japan, and lively exchanges of information took place between participants during the break times and poster session.

■ Opening Remarks

[【Recording】](#)

FUKUDA Kaoru, Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) delivered opening remarks.

Summary: EDU-Port Japan began in fiscal 2016, and this year reached its tenth year, thanks to the cooperation of the businesses and institutions participating in EDU-Port. In recent years there has been an increase internationally in interest in Japanese-style education. With the growing number of cases of Japanese educational practices contributing to educational reform and problem-solving in various countries, such as the introduction of *Tokkatsu* (special activities) in Egypt, or interest in nutritional education in Uzbekistan, we have been receiving feedback from business operators participating in EDU-Port to the effect that Japanese educational practices are playing a part in resolving the educational challenges of various countries, and that they have been able to rediscover the merits of Japanese education. The service rendered by these initiatives is not limited to overseas countries; it also provides an opportunity for the reaffirmation of the value of Japanese education within Japan. It is my hope that

at this Symposium lively discussions based on these initiatives will be held covering a wide range of perspectives, and that the Symposium will serve as an opportunity for network-building between participants.



【Session 1: Report on Research Projects】

■ The Impact of EDU-Port Projects on the Internationalization and Quality Improvement of Education in Japan

—Through Analysis of Reports on Past Projects and Interviews with Stakeholders—

[【Recoding】](#) [【Material】](#)

HANBARA Yoshiko,
Professor at United Graduate School of Professional Development of Teachers,
NUMAJIRI Takuya,
Special Assistant Professor at Division of Teacher Education,
University of Fukui

Summary: This research project analyzed the final reports of 112 research, pilot and supported projects carried out as part of EDU-Port Japan between FY2016 and FY 2023, and examined their effect on the internationalization and qualitative improvement of Japanese education. The fundamental principle of EDU-Port has been to expand Japanese educational know-how overseas and to feed back to Japan the insights thus gained. However, in many cases the feedback to Japan has been discussed sketchily, as the incidental outcomes of individual projects; the overall picture and generative mechanism have not been sufficiently visualized. In this research project, we have tried to view what comes back to Japan not as merely an outcome, but as a cyclical process of learning and transformation triggered by overseas collaboration.

From an analysis of co-occurrence networks and clusters using AI, it became clear that the feedback to Japan is made up of the interaction of four areas of meaning, namely (i) the principles and values of international understanding and international cooperation; (ii) learning and capacity development of educational practitioners; (iii) practical techniques such as ICT and the development of teaching materials; and (iv) applications to subject-specific pedagogy and community collaboration.

Further, through interviews with eight institutions and a long-term case study carried out by the University of Fukui, it was shown that feedback to Japan is connected to the reconstruction of practices originating in the reflections of educational practitioners, and is formed through systematic dialogue and in the process of influencing the culture of study and training. It was then confirmed that the transformation of teaching staff brought about through intercultural encounters creates a “model for knowledge circulation” that spreads to students’ learning and to the school culture.

As EDU-Port moves on to the next phase, it will be necessary to establish a cyclical infrastructure of knowledge, that is, “overseas expansion → domestic feedback → further collaboration”: to strengthen the function of the collaborative platform where diverse institutions learn from each other: and to recognize domestic feedback as an essential part of overseas expansion.



■ The Horizontal Development of Japanese-Style Education in Africa: Through Initiatives to Improve Basic Academic Abilities in Ghana [【Recording】](#) [【Material】](#)

SUZUKI Mariko,

Assistant Vice President, Licensing Operations Promotion Department,

Kumon Institute of Education Co., Ltd.

Summary: In addition to our franchise classroom business, Kumon Institute of Education is expanding Kumon-style learning in over 60 countries and regions through our licensing operations in cooperation with our partners and through projects to introduce Kumon into schools. In this research project, we carried out a verification of the effects of the introduction of the Kumon-style learning program on the basic academic skills, non-cognitive skills and living environment in a private elementary school (Low-Fee Private School) in Ghana.

First, an academic ability assessment targeting third- and fifth-grade students confirmed that, while there was a high rate of correct answers in the case of simple addition, the rate of correct answers fell when it came to subtraction and calculations done on paper, indicating challenges in basic computational skills. It also became clear that motivation towards school and lessons, and the sense of belonging, were generally high, and that there is in place a foundation from which children can approach learning with a positive attitude.

This being the situation, Kumon-style learning was introduced for 44 third-grade students, 30 minutes per session, five days a week for three months, in combination with training for local teachers and remote support from Japan. In a before-and-after comparison, it was confirmed that there was an improvement in academic performance; there was an increase in proficiency in all study units, such as children being able to solve basic calculations with greater speed and accuracy.

In addition, teachers reported improvements in the children's non-cognitive skills, such as time management, concentration, and the children adopting an attitude of thinking and acting on their own accord. Changes in guidance styles were also observed, with teachers becoming more aware of the differences between individuals.

In addition to Ghana, Kumon Institute of Education is expanding its activities in other countries, including Namibia, South Africa and Uganda; and improvements in basic academic skills as well as the development of a commitment to self-study and self-management skills have been verified.



■ Q & A

[\[Recording\]](#)

HANBARA Yoshiko,
Professor at United Graduate School of Professional Development of Teachers,
NUMAJIRI Takuya,
Special Assistant Professor at Division of Teacher Education,
University of Fukui

SUZUKI Mariko,
Assistant Vice President, Licensing Operations Promotion Department,
Kumon Institute of Education Co., Ltd.

Summary: Following Session 1, a number of questions were raised from participants both online and present in the venue.

An online participant asked whether, when Kumon was introduced in Ghana, each child had been provided with a tablet. Ms. Suzuki answered that 15 tablets were provided, the use of which was shared between the 44 students.

There was a question from the floor regarding the differences between subjects when introducing educational programs overseas. Ms. Suzuki replied that arithmetic is a relatively universal subject the introduction of which is easy even in the case of a different country or culture; in the case of education in the national language however, the cultural background and linguistic characteristics are important, making essential the development of teaching materials based on substantial discussions with local counterparts.

Mr. Numajiri pointed out that at the University of Fukui, staff in a variety of positions, such as teachers of Science or English and school leadership, participate in international collaboration, and described how, from the perspective of gaining a deeper understanding of the children and reflecting on their own educational practices, teaching staff were learning more profoundly regardless of their subject.

There was also a question regarding the duration of the Kumon learning program and the sustainability of its effects. In response, Ms. Suzuki explained that the program in Ghana had a duration of approximately three months, but that it is expected that the formal introduction into schools would be on over the course of the school year (roughly ten months). She pointed out that in a follow-up study of the Bangladesh project it was confirmed that while cognitive abilities tended to decline gradually over time after the learning program came to an end, non-cognitive skills were maintained.



【Session 2 : Towards the Next Phase of EDU-Port Japan: The Establishment of an International Educational Program Originating in Japan】

■ Establishment of a New International Education Program

[【Recording】](#) [【Presentation Material】](#) [【Distributed Material】](#)

HIRAYAMA Naoko,
Deputy Assistant Minister/Director, International
Affairs Division, Minister's Secretariat, MEXT

Summary: Since its inauguration in FY2016, EDU-Port Japan has been operating a public-private partnership platform; and the achievements of its research projects and supported projects amount to 145 projects in 57 countries and regions worldwide. Challenges remain, however, including the insufficient articulation and systematization of a common concept of Japanese-style education that underpins these diverse initiatives, as well as the limited effectiveness in communicating its strengths.



A principal characteristic of Japanese school education is its aim for holistic education, with an emphasis on a well-balanced development of “Solid academic ability, Richness in mind, Healthy body (Chi-Toku-Tai)”. The institutional support for this style of education lies in the setting of nationwide standards for educational content according to government curriculum guidelines, the mandatory use of textbooks, and the securing of staff resources through the cost of teaching staff salaries being borne by the national treasury. These serve as an important foundation that supports equal educational opportunities and the maintenance of standards. The cooperativeness, sociability and a sense of social norms cultivated under this system are factors leading to Japan being recognized internationally as an orderly, safe and secure society, an advantage that can convey to the world the value of Japanese-style education.

In recent years such international organizations as the United Nations and the OECD have pointed out the

importance of these non-cognitive skills as elements essential for 21st-century skills and wellbeing that will be important in shaping the future in terms of human growth and social development.

Going forward, EDU-Port intends to articulate systematically the concept of holistic education and Japan's distinctive educational practices, linking them to the international discussion on non-cognitive skills, and to arrange them into a common language that relevant organizations can share when expanding overseas. The intention is to construct a new educational program based on "Chi-Toku-Tai" in a manner that will contribute to the overseas expansion of EDU-Port-affiliated institutions, and to work on its dissemination overseas.

The knowledge and networks built up to date by JICA, JETRO, international bodies and EDU-Port-affiliated institutions will be indispensable in promoting the local implementation of the new educational program in line with the actual needs of the various overseas countries, and we would like to ask for your cooperation as we go forward.

Further, in discussions that look to the post-SDGs agenda, "collaborative well-being" is expected to become increasingly important. In this context, Japanese education that focuses on "Chi-Toku-Tai", as well as educational approaches originating from Japan such as Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), are considered to have significant potential to contribute further to the development of non-cognitive and socio-emotional skills that underpin this vision.

■ Non-cognitive Skills and Social Emotional Learning in International Education Discourse

[【Recoding】](#) [【Material】](#)

MIZUNOYA Suguru,
The Head of the Technical Cooperation Team,
UNESCO International Institute for Educational
Planning (IIEP)

Summary: One of the strengths of Japanese education is that the academic level is very high, not only among schoolchildren and students but also among adults. Also, in Japan, as represented in the term "the zest for living", efforts to foster such abilities as independence, cooperativeness and sociability have been incorporated into lessons and school life, including in moral and physical education. This approach to education occupies a central position in the history of Japanese educational policy, with a far-reaching accumulation of knowledge and experience.



On the other hand, there are several potential challenges in the international expansion of Japanese-style education. While many countries resonate with its underlying philosophy, practical implementation requires concrete information on institutional design, training systems, and associated costs. If these cannot be provided, it is technically difficult for partner countries to decide whether they incorporate Japanese-style education. Accordingly, it is important that Japanese concepts such as "Tokkatsu" be translated into international policy language such as "learning outcomes" or "competencies".

One proposal as to how to do that is to explain Japanese-style education using the concept of socio-emotional skills (Social and Emotional Learning, or SEL). SEL is a concept that includes sociability, self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making and human relationship skills, and also relates to non-cognitive skills and 21st-century skills. The EASEL Project led by Professor Stephanie Jones at Harvard University developed a taxonomy of SEL, making possible a comparative analysis of various SEL-related frameworks using a set of competency domains such as cognition, identity, perspective, value, social or emotional. Analyzing Japan's

concept of *zest for living* through this framework reveals its balanced emphasis across these domains.

Currently, the importance of SEL is growing internationally. Through discussions in its Futures of Education program, UNESCO is examining the vision and form education should take in the future. This initiative highlights the need to reassess the framework of conventional education and to reaffirm the importance of education grounded in values such as human rights, social justice, human dignity, and sustainability. Furthermore, future education must equip children not only with knowledge but also with the skills needed to act as change agents in addressing global challenges. Discussions of this kind are also related to the Post 2030, Beyond 2030 agenda for education, and are highly compatible with the principles of Japanese-style education, which fosters such strengths as cooperativeness, interpersonal relationships and independence. Discussions on SEL are going forward at UNESCO Headquarters, country offices, research institutions, etc., and support for implementation is progressing in each country.

It is important, as we move towards the development of the next phase of EDU-Port, to use SEL as a shared language connecting international discussions on education. By classifying the educational goals and policy objectives of partner countries in terms of SEL competency, and by similarly presenting the content that Japan can support within a SEL framework, it will be possible to clarify the learning process, the conditions for implementation and initiatives for each area. This will make it possible for each country to position Japan's educational cooperation within its own organizational reform agenda, thereby increasing the likelihood of its establishment as a sustainable system. EDU-Port can become the foundation of the intellectual leadership needed for that to happen.

■ Introducing JICA's Practices of Holistic Education

[\[Recoding\]](#) [\[Material\]](#)

HIGUCHI Hajime,

Director, Basic Education Team 2, Basic Education Group, Human Development Department,
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Summary: In 2021 JICA formulated a global agenda for 20 issues, among which the education sector is positioned as one of the priority issues. In the field of education, three cluster strategies were determined, and within one of these, namely the “Cluster for improving learning through the development of textbooks and learning materials”, we are working on the cultivation of non-cognitive skills.



A concrete example of this is the “Project for Creating Environment for Quality Learning”. This project was our first attempt to introduce Japanese *Tokkatsu* (special activities), such as daily classroom coordinators, class meetings, class guidance, etc., into Egyptian school education. In Phase 1, *Tokkatsu* were incorporated into the national curriculum, and work progressed on the cultivation of teachers' consultants and implementation in pilot schools. In Phase 2 (2021~2027) we are building on these initiatives to gradually expand nationwide the practices implemented in the pilot schools. We are also implementing pilot activities aimed at the introduction of *Tokkatsu* at the secondary school level. Further, as an initiative undertaken independently by the government of Egypt and separate from the above-mentioned project, former school principals have been dispatched from Japan to the Egyptian Japanese School (EJS) as supervisors; and an initiative is also going ahead under the ownership of the Egyptian government to establish a diploma course in *Tokkatsu* at a local university.

Other initiatives include a technical cooperation project, “Project for Promoting Positive Learning Environment

for All Children” and a JICA Partnership Program, “Project to Establish a Foundation for the Continued Implementation and Dissemination of Tokkatsu (Special Activities)” that is being implemented in Jordan. In an educational setting facing such challenges as an influx of refugees and overcrowded classrooms, initiatives are being implemented to support children’s continued school attendance through improvement of the learning environment and the development of social skills.

Further, in response to the attention being given internationally to our activities in Egypt, government officials from several countries are being invited to Japan to participate in a Knowledge Co-creation program titled “Holistic Education: The Japanese Hands-on Approach”. Through this program, participants learn about *Tokkatsu* (special activities) through school visits—from kindergarten to lower secondary school—as well as lectures and discussions. They also develop practicable action plans while comparing what they experience with the system in their own country.

With regard to the development of non-cognitive skills, positive evaluations have been received from school stakeholders and parents, and in a survey conducted during the project it was reported that there was an improvement in students’ self-esteem. At the same time, in order to scale up this approach more broadly, it is necessary to examine how such initiatives can be positioned within national education policies, particularly in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa where learning poverty remains a serious challenge. Furthermore, research findings on the development of non-cognitive skills are still limited, underscoring the importance of continued practice and further research in this area.⁷

■ Discussion and Q&A

[【Recording】](#)

< Panelists >

Moderator : KITAMURA Yuto, Special Advisor to the President / Professor, University of Tokyo

- SUZUKI Kan, Professor, University of Tokyo
- HIRAYAMA Naoko, MEXT
- MIZUNOYA Suguru, UNESCO
- HIGUCHI Hajime, JICA

In the second half of Session 2, a discussion was held on the theme “Towards the Next Phase of EDU-Port: “The Establishment of an International Educational Program Originating in Japan”, based on the presentations made so far. The discussion was moderated by Professor Kitamura.

Summary: Professor Kitamura pointed out that one point shared by all the presentations was the question of how Japanese education should be articulated and conveyed to the international community, and asked the panelists for their comments on the concept for the new international education program that had been put forward by Ms. Hirayama.

Professor Suzuki said he thought that the content of the Symposium presented in a multi-dimensional way the values that EDU-Port aimed for, and he stressed the significance of restructuring the strengths of Japanese-style education in an international context, based on “Solid academic ability, Richness in mind, Healthy body” and socio-emotional skills (SEL).

Mr. Mizunoya highlighted a fundamental tension in international education cooperation. While framing concepts such as “solid academic ability, richness in mind, and a healthy body” and Japanese-style education as a distinct “Japanese model” can strengthen strategic branding, it may also introduce political sensitivities and limit

their adaptability across contexts.

He therefore emphasized the need to both brand and de-brand these concepts: to align them with internationally recognized frameworks, such as social and emotional learning (SEL), in order to enhance their universality and applicability, while at the same time maintaining a clear Japanese identity. Careful navigation between these two approaches is essential.

Mr. Higuchi stated that Japanese educational practices are attracting a lot of attention overseas, and that it was possible for “Solid academic ability, Richness in mind, Healthy body” to form a framework through which to explain the characteristics of Japanese-style education in a way that can be easily understood.

Ms. Hirayama stressed that “Solid academic ability, Richness in mind, Healthy body” should not simply be exported as is to foreign countries; it was important that the concept be arranged into a common language via which the principles and achievements of Japanese-style education can be shared with the international community; and she expressed her desire to promote the principles of Japanese-style education in a form that will contribute to international cooperation and world peace.

In the Q & A session, the panelists answered a wide range of questions from participants attending both in person and online, on such topics as the strengths and challenges of Japanese-style education; the impact of the university entrance exam system; the low level of confidence in self-initiated learning; and the level of awareness on the part of parents and society. There were also discussions on the need for localization when spreading Japanese-style education overseas, and on what form education should ideally take in the era of AI.

Finally, Professor Kitamura summed up the discussions by saying that the Symposium had not limited itself to talking about the promotion of Japanese-style education overseas, but had been an opportunity to take a new look at Japanese education itself, and to consider how to make Japanese education better. He brought the discussion to a close after touching on the fact that EDU-Port has been developing as a “port” where people can come together and share information.



■ Looking Back on the Past Ten Years and Looking Ahead to the Next Phase of EDU-Port Japan [\[Recording\]](#)

SUZUKI Kan,
Professor, University of Tokyo

Summary: The launch of EDU-Port Japan was prompted by the idea that, as Japan’s educational policies tended to be confined to discussion within the country, there was a need to bring about cross-border traffic in education through the establishment of a “port”. With the collaboration of not only the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports,

Science and Technology but also such bodies as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, JICA and JETRO, this program has been formulated so as to be a framework for public-private cooperation.

Over the course of ten years, 145 projects have been implemented in 57 countries and regions, evolving into initiatives that involve some 100,000 Japanese stakeholders and over a million stakeholders in partner countries. I would like to express my appreciation to the many people who have been involved to date.

One fond memory I have is of explaining and discussing EDU-Port and *Tokkatsu* with the delegation accompanying the Egyptian Deputy Minister for Education, during discussions following talks between former Prime Minister Abe and the President of Egypt. In contrast, the greatest crisis for EDU-Port was the spread of Covid-19. The fact that, even with restrictions on international travel, concerned organizations continued to cooperate on their projects and were able to maintain their cooperative relationships by working online, was a significant achievement.

Furthermore, EDU-Port is an initiative through which Japan and the world work together to create a new form of education while learning from each other. With this Symposium as a new starting point, we will continue to work together to deepen our communication, overcome diverse challenges, and co-create education for a new era. For that reason, I would like to ask for your continued understanding, cooperation and collaboration.



■ Poster Session

[【List of Projects】](#)

At the venue, a poster session was held by the implementing organizations of EDU-Port Japan-adapted projects (31 projects, 27 organizations). In front of many of the posters for each of the projects, the organizations could be seen holding discussions with the attaches in charge of education, science and technology from various embassies in Japan, or discussing with other implementing organizations future project development and possibilities for new collaborations. From start to finish, the venue was filled with animated discussion. Participants were heard to comment that “There was a lively exchange of opinions between participants, and it turned out to be a valuable opportunity to encounter a wide variety of different perspectives.”



In the post-event questionnaire on the Symposium as a whole, comments received included, “The final Q&A session was very interesting”, and “I felt that this Symposium was a very significant opportunity to learn extensively about the various initiatives of each organization and institution, and about the latest trends.” “The presentations were specific in their content, and I was able to gain a deeper understanding thanks to the explanations that were based on real examples and data.”