

5th GPAJ Refugee Crisis Workshop

Date: Friday, June 3, 2022, 20:00-22:00 (Japan time)

Speaker: Ms. Watanabe Kankolongo Sayaka, Representative of WELgee

Theme: WELgee's activities to support refugees and refugee-applicants



Summary:

The 5th workshop invited Ms. Watanabe Kankolongo Sayaka, as a guest speaker. As Representative of WELgee, she has been actively engaged in supports to refugees and refugee-status applicants in Japan. In the 5th workshop, WELgee's activities were presented and discussion among participants followed,

(Presentation by Ms. Watanabe)

The adoption ratio of refugee applicants is less than 1% in Japan, and it takes 4 years and 4 months in average to receive the results of refugee screening. While many refugees have outstanding abilities, such as multi-language skill, or expertise as engineers, IT programmers, business managers, entrepreneurs, and university professors, their abilities are not utilized for long years until screening process is completed, leaving them in a state of physical and mental disarray. WELgee launched JobCopass program in 2017 to create a space for job-matching for those talented refugees and refugee applicants. So far, 15 companies have hired refugee applicants on a full-time basis through JobCopass program. WELgee intends to further develop this program and expand job opportunities in the future. In order to facilitate this initiative, WELgee creates a monthly-supporter system and encourages professionals to join this program as mentors. WELgee expects your participation and assistance.

(Discussion)

Following the lecture, Ms. Watanabe and participants engaged in a lively exchange of opinions. Major topics discussed were as follows: refugee screening process in Japan (reasons of taking a long time for completing screening), relaxation of strict refugee screening in Japan (obstacles of relaxation), business modality to promote this initiative (comparative advantages of establishing a general incorporated association and an NPO), how to support 'unskilled' refugees, the tolerance of Japanese society to foreigners and the future of Japanese society (how to create a society in relation with refugees, foreign labors and immigrants), the settlement of foreigners in Japan (not as a worker, but as a habitant who lives in Japanese society).