

Andrew Pickup Award – September 2023

Migration and Global Development MA

Mami Kamoshita

Introduction

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Andrew Pickup Award, which allowed me to complete a research placement in Japan at NPO WELgee, based in Tokyo. This placement was a crucial aspect of my research, which focused on understanding the emerging complementary pathway for asylum-seekers and refugees in Japan, co-created by NPOs and the private sector.

Organisation Overview

- Name: Non-Profit Organisation WELgee
- Office Location: Tokyo, Japan
- Placement Period: June – August 2023
- My role at the organisation: Intern at (i) Career Training Department and (ii) Public Relations and Corporate Engagement Department



Research Overview

This research is one of the first attempts to discover the emerging phenomena of nonprofit organisations (NPOs) creating a complementary pathway by facilitating the employment of asylum-seekers and refugees as high-skilled workers in Japan, historically known for its stringent refugee policies. Taking a case study at NPO WELgee, the sole advocator for “refugees as talents” in Japan, this study explores the motivations behind companies hiring refugees who are not immediately “ready-to-work”, the NPO’s dynamic process with the employers in co-creating new positions, and the state’s stance on this new pathway. Primary narratives are obtained through semi-structured qualitative interviews with eleven NPO staff and pro-bonos, three corporate executives and one staff from the government-related organisation to capture the ongoing phenomenon.

Research Question

- What role did the non-profit organisations (NPOs) play in influencing the companies to make new job positions for refugees and creating a new pathway to stabilise their visas?

Fund Usage

The bursary fund was utilised to cover my plane ticket, bus tickets and lodging during the three months I spent in Tokyo to conduct my placement in person. During the three months, I completed a participatory observation of 11 participants from WELgee and 15 qualitative interviews with members from NPOs, companies and government-related organisations, shaping the main body of my research. I could also attend several key events and company visits in person, which provided networking opportunities to find interview participants and a tangible understanding of the dynamics and relationships between the NPOs, companies, Japanese government agencies, and international organisations surrounding asylum-seeker and refugee employment.

As one of the first attempts to cover asylum-seekers and refugee's employment issues in Japan, the dissertation will be circulated among the supporters of WELgee and shared through multiple channels to raise awareness regarding the refugee issue in Japan, which is not very well-known to the general public. The outcome is also used to encourage more employers to hire displaced people and promote economic inclusion of asylum-seekers and refugees through sharing good practices by the pioneering companies.

This research owes its existence to the Andrew Pickup award bursary and the strong support and encouragement from Su Richards, the Global Studies placement coordinator. My physical presence in Tokyo allowed me to develop a professional and personal network with NPO members, corporations and government agencies working in asylum-seeker and refugee employment.

Participating in formal and informal conversations and activities with these leading members helped me dive deeper into an insider view of emerging phenomena.

Going forward

Moving forward, I aim to pursue my career surrounding migrant labour mobility and promoting refugee economic inclusion. I would like to build on the knowledge obtained through this research placement and experience in engagement and partnerships with the private sector at my internship. I express profound gratitude for the invaluable scholarship and the remarkable generosity extended by the family of Andrew Pickup, which has enabled my physical presence in Tokyo, where I had the privilege to engage with interview participants and access resources that shaped the main body of my research.

Key events attended in person:

WELgee's event, "Refugee Career Demo Day", on 15 June 2023

- 56 business leaders from 40 companies and 20 refugee talents joined to interact in person and over 10 media representatives attended to cover the event
- 13 industry-leading companies sponsored, including Seven-Eleven Japan Co., Ltd. and PwC Japan LLC. as main sponsors



- I joined as one of the 15 WELgee members hosting the event as a facilitator and interpreter at one of the 10 discussion tables between corporate decision-makers and refugee candidates



- The event was covered on one of the major media company in Japan: The Asahi Shimbun Company, on 20 June 2023 (Reference: <https://www.asahi.com/articles/DA3S15666417.html>)



Company interviews with Employers of Asylum-seekers/Refugees

- 7 July 2023 - City Computer Co., Ltd.
 - Assisted interview through drafting minutes and schedule coordination and communication



シティコンピュータ様

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ティング部 岡本博行様

職種
ITエンジニア

業種
IT-BPO

従業員規模	創業	所在地
中規模中企業	1989年	和歌山・東京の本店を中心 に、国内外に15の支社

事業概要
BPO事業、派遣事業等、幅広く事業を展開している会社。「世界中の人々の雇用環境の創出を通じ、心物(しんぶつ)両面の豊かな社会の実現。」をミッションに、海外拠点も展開。日本国内においても海外人材の採用を積極的に進めている。

- 10 August 2023 - ADAWARP
 - Conducted interview and drafted the published material, assisted the schedule coordination and communication



ADAWARP様

ADAWARP
代表取締役社長: 安谷屋樹 様
後輩エンジニア: Faloon様

職種
ソフトウェアエンジニア / インフラエンジニア

業種
IT(遠隔通信ソフトウェア開発)

従業員規模	創業	所在地
5名	2017年	東京都台東区

事業概要
アダワーブジャパンは「YOU CAN WARP」をモットーに、建設、物流、農業分野の人手不足を遠隔操作で解消するためのソリューションを開発しています。

(Reference: <https://welgee-talents.jp/>)

Informal Gatherings

- In-person placement at WELgee and personal connections provided opportunities to conduct informal discussions with a senior member of UNHCR Japan, and a board director of government-related program promoting foreign workers inclusion in Japan. Although I was not able to include these discussions as direct quotes in the dissertation, this provided me with further understanding and knowledge on the government's involvement and their perspective on the NPO's initiatives.

Other achievements during the internship

- 8 July 2023 - Sempai Session at Career Training Department
 - Organised career event for asylum-seekers and refugees, facilitated and managed the online event in co-ordination with NPO staff, interns and pro-bonos



WELgee Sempai Session
<<Sharing contents from June 15th Career Demo Day>>
Date & Time: July 8th 20:00-21:30
Location: Online (Zoom)

Finding job and working in Japanese companies:
Stories from International's side & Corporate side

- ◆ Professional Career Stories shared by two Sempai internationals
- ◆ Japanese company views on working with internationals
- ◆ Q&A session

Register from below link or QR code:
<https://zfmz.com/SGp4kVOHTAomnPS9xYu0>

“What does the Japanese companies look for in international candidates?”

“How is it like working in Japanese companies?”

WELgee

