OUR RESEARCH PROGRAMS

July 2024

THE TOKYO FOUNDATION
FOR POLICY RESEARCH

OUR RESEARCH PROGRAMS
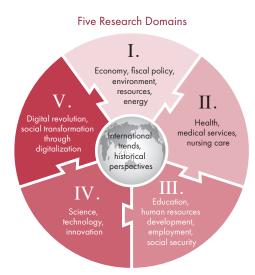
Our Research Domains

To better meet the challenges of the seismic shifts occurring in society, both at home and abroad, Japan needs to quickly revamp its postwar political, economic, and social systems to give individuals greater freedom to choose their own paths in life, pursue a fuller role in society, have a bigger say in government decisions, and actively participate in the preservation of peace.

Achieving these goals at a time of sweeping change requires an innovative think tank to research and implement new ideas unfettered by the conventions and practices of the postwar years. In October 2021, the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research transitioned to a restructured system of policy research to analyze issues and identify solutions in innovative, new ways.

Such a policy innovator can longer rely on the "convoy system" that helped guide Japan's postwar growth but must articulate the needs of independent-minded individuals and undertake research that can enrich people's lives and society, revive Japan's dynamism, and help preserve peace, while at the same time keeping an eye on historical precedents and international trends.

Our experts are now conducting policy research in the following five domains:

- Economy, fiscal policy, environment, resources, and energy
- Health, medical services, and nursing care
- Education, human resources development, employment, and social security
- Science, technology, and innovation
- Digital revolution and social transformation through digitalization.

Five Research Domains

This publication (https://www.tokyofoundation.org/news/detail.php?news_id=2898) introduces the approximately 20 research programs currently underway (as of July 2024) at the Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research and the research fellows engaged in those programs.

Our restructured system of policy research has only just begun, and many aspects of the new setup are still in their formative stages. We have come a long way, though, since our founding in 1997 as the Global Foundation for Research and Scholarship, and we look forward to working with and sharing our insights with all our stakeholders in the months and years ahead.

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Training Program to Implement EBPM for Local Government Personnel

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Nariyasu Yamasawa
SENIOR FELLOW

(alphabetical order)

As local governments lack human resources to implement Evidence Based Policy Making (EBPM) using data as evidence, the development of personnel familiar with EBPM is an urgent issue for more effective regional economic policies.

In this research program, we establish and implement a training program to acquire basic skills in the use of data required in policy making from the perspective of EBPM in cooperation with specific local governments as a pioneering model project, focusing on the four pillars explained below.

In addition, by reviewing the results of the training, we aim to develop a more general model for data education that can be applied to other local governments.

(1) EBPM Training Project

In cooperation with local governments, we develop a training program for local government officials to acquire basic skills in using data in line with their policymaking.

(2) Regional Data Project

We provide guidance to local governments on how to use existing data as well as how to develop new data that measures regional economic conditions for policymaking purposes.

(3) EBPM Research Project

We work with local government officials to conduct a policy advocacy project in line with the EBPM approach by participating in a government-sponsored policy proposal competition.

(4) Survey of local governments for effective implementation of EBPM

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Comprehensive Empirical Analysis of Children's Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Skills

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■ Principal Investigator

Kengo Igei
SENIOR FELLOW

■ Co-Investigator

Makiko Nakamuro
RESEARCH DIRECTOR

Public interest in children's cognitive and non-cognitive skills has been high in recent years, and it is of great policy importance to elucidate the factors that influence these skills. Local governments and private companies have begun to collect data on cognitive and non-cognitive skills in a sophisticated and long-term manner, but there is considerable room for the use of these data in ways that will lead to policy recommendations from the perspective of scholars in economics of education and empirical analysis. This research project attempts to work with such local governments and private companies to comprehensively examine the factors of cognitive skills as represented by academic achievement, as well as non-cognitive skills other than academic achievement. The findings and policy implications of this program will be proposed directly to the collaborating local governments and private companies, and information will be disseminated through a webinar on research findings and discussion papers, as well as through outreach to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers in the field of education utilizing a network of program members.

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Future Vision for Sustainable Water Management

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SENIOR FELLOW

The stable supply of safe water in Japan has historically relied on a comprehensive system known as Water Minfra (Infrastructure of all, by all, and for all), encompassing water supply and sewage systems, agricultural water facilities, flood control structures, natural and artificial ecosystems, as well as the involvement of various stakeholders. However, sustainable maintenance and management is becoming increasingly difficult due to population decline, land use change, lack of financial and personnel resources, and more frequent disasters.

Both urban and rural areas require urgent reconstruction of region-specific Water Minfra, ensuring sustainable upkeep and readiness for sudden emergencies. Outstanding specialists in Water Minfra who know the intricacies of the system are essential to this effort.

Insufficient risk management at the local level leads to roughly 20,000 water supply accidents annually, exacerbating crises during disasters like the Noto Peninsula Earthquake. Consequently, there is a growing demand for leaders capable of guiding not just local governments but also communities in effective water management.

Across Japan, numerous instances exist where such adept leaders spearhead community-driven initiatives, be it maintaining water supply networks or implementing eco-friendly infrastructure projects. In this research, we aim to articulate how such Water Minfra talent is nurtured, how organizations are structured around them, and how expertise is disseminated, offering strategies for systematically fostering exceptional talent in Water Minfra management.

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Contingency Plans for a Potential Financial Crisis

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Saori Tsuiki
SENIOR FELLOW

This research program will develop contingency plans for a possible financial crisis in Japan. By preparing the plans beforehand, it aims to minimize the damage to the national economy that such a crisis may cause.

The contingency plans address two crisis levels: (1) the precursory stage and (2) the initial stage. Each stage is defined by the level of long-term interest rates. Our proposals will include emergency fiscal measures, market-taming measures, and emergency expenditure reductions for each stage.

We will mainly use quantitative simulations and institutional analyses to develop our plans. One focus will be the Bank of Japan, which now possesses more than 50% of Japanese government bonds. We will simulate the BOJ's financial standing under different economic conditions and investigate how it can maintain the market's confidence during a crisis.

Pre- and Post-COVID Chinese Society, Economy, and Politics

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RESEARCH FELLOW

Even as the Chinese leadership struggled to cope with COVID-19 over the past three years, Xi Jinping managed to gain an unprecedented third term as president. This research program will analyze how post-COVID Chinese society, economy, and politics has changed from pre-pandemic years, focusing on whether the Xi administration can sustain China's development as the world's second-largest economy. Chinese society faces such issues as rising joblessness and income disparity, and the Chinese Communist Party needs to show people that its agenda can lead the country to a brighter tomorrow. The program will also offer recommendations on how the Japanese government and private companies can build a new relationship with China.

Human Resource Development to Tackle Issues in the Fields of Health, Medical Care, and Nursing through Private Sector Initiatives

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■ Principal Investigator

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RESEARCH DIRECTOR

Based on insights drawn from the research program "Developing Sustainable and Resilient Health, Nursing, and Long-Term Care Systems in the Post-COVID Era", which was conducted from 2021 to 2023, this research program aims to develop human resources to lead new health, medical, and caregiving business models through private sector initiatives.

It addresses the limits of public health systems by fostering innovative business models and ideas. The research connects experts and practitioners to develop individuals who possess sector-specific knowledge and can approach problems from a global and holistic perspective. Training programs are designed to enhance their ability to work with stakeholders, use media for social contribution, and implement effective practices.

The initiative emphasizes community-based strategies, partnering with local governments, businesses, and civic groups to inspire private sector innovation through new technologies and business models that are informed by regional success stories and innovative efforts. This approach aims to break away from conventional frameworks, creating opportunities for fresh ideas. The Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research is expected to play a key role in this ecosystem, acting as a hub for developing innovative leaders in healthcare and caregiving.

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Capacity Development of 'Connecting Personnel' for Science and Technology Innovation Policy

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■ Principal Investigator

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Modern science and technology policy requires close linkages with the realization of desirable social change in various fields. Such linkages require coordinating mechanisms between science and technology policy and sectoral policies aimed at implementing solutions to social problems, policy linkages between science and technology policy and security policy, and autonomous responses to ELSI (ethical legal and social issues) by the private sector. It is not enough to have only institutional mechanisms to enable such coordination, collaboration, and autonomous responses; it is also important to secure personnels and develop their capacity to take charge of these mechanisms. Specifically, human resources are needed to "connect," i.e. to "connect" science and technology policy with sectoral policy, science and technology policy with security policy, and research and development with ELSI responses. This program defines capacity for the 'connecting personnel' required by organizations, such as central governments (e.g. Cabinet Office), local governments, enterprises and research institutions, as well as the elements of capacity-building programs (training, personnel exchange and career paths) through case studies in Japan and abroad, and makes policy recommendations.

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Economic Analyses of Pandemics

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■ Principal Investigator

Asako Chiba
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■ Co-Investigator

Keiichiro Kobayashi
RESEARCH DIRECTOR

Pandemics have long been dealt with as a medical issue. Pandemic-related literature in economics is still relatively scarce, although there was an uptick in studies following the outbreak of COVID-19. To contribute to the evaluation of the costs and benefits of pandemic policies, this research program will analyze the social and economic impact of the pandemic using two approaches: (1) a simulation of infection trends and economic activity and (2) empirical research using macro- and microdata. In (1), we extend the agent-based model used in previous research into an economic-model by introducing agents' adaptive behavior and economic parameters. This extension allows measurement of both sector-level and micro-level impact. In (2), we quantitatively analyze data from both publicly available sources and those gained by conducting online surveys to show the impact of policy interventions during COVID-19. In the earlier research program, we suggested there would be a substantial decrease in marriages and a decline in the labor supply due to both the illness and quarantine measures. We will continue to deal with these topics but also undertake statistical analyses to rigorously identify the effects of the pandemic. In both approaches, we will publish the results as a report accessible to the general public and as an academic paper.

Human Resource Development for Data-Driven Healthcare Policy

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RESEARCH DIRECTOR

This research will analyze large-scale healthcare, nursing, and long-term care data and, as a think tank independent of the government, focus on various issues in healthcare, nursing, and long-term care that the government is hesitant to propose despite pressing national concerns. Policy recommendations will be made based on data analysis on the following three themes. We will empirically clarify the actual conditions of the following medical services, make specific policy recommendations on these issues, and train human resources.

(1) Reform of healthcare delivery system

(2) Reform of diverse financial resources

(3) Reform of healthcare human resource development

Expected specific outcomes in the fields of healthcare and society are patient-centered care and enhancement of community healthcare services in the healthcare field, and appropriate utilization of healthcare resources and securing sustainable financial resources, effective healthcare cost management, and improvement of patient quality of life in society.

Economic Analysis of the Relationship between Education, Social Security, and Taxation

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■ Principal Investigator

Takero Doi
RESEARCH DIRECTOR

The Japanese government has announced the expansion of the child-care allowance in its 'Children's Future Strategy' and has decided to promote the 'integrated three-pronged labor market reforms,' including re-skilling, in its 'Grand Design and Action Plan for a New Form of Capitalism 2023 Revised Version.' This research program will investigate the interactions between learning, education, social security, and taxation in Japan with the following two objectives.

(1) This research program will analyze the effects of removing income limits on the child-care allowance and income tax reform on the disposable income of households raising children. Additionally, it will examine the effects of these changes on the parenting time of married couples and the education of children, including educational opportunities, non-cognitive ability and others, in subsequent years. This analysis will use panel data from the Japan Household Panel Survey (JHPS) and other sources. Based on the results, we will derive policy implications for the planned expansion of child-care allowances for children's education and recommend necessary measures.

(2) The JHPS is surveying employees on self-development and re-skilling. This research program will conduct the following analysis to contribute to policy recommendations necessary for the government to support capacity building through re-skilling, based on the survey: How much do income and living conditions affect the implementation of self-development and re-skilling, taking into account the influence of social security and tax systems on disposable income; does the annual income requirement for social security affect reskilling; and to what extent does reskilling reduce income inequality in the economy.

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Economic Policy Regime after Global Inflation

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Principal Investigator

Hideo Hayakawa
SENIOR FELLOW

For nearly 30 years since the 1980s, neoliberalism was the dominant economic policy regime among major industrial countries. It lost its persuasiveness during the course of 2010s, however, following the global financial crisis of 2007–08, widening of income inequality, and increased focus on climate change. We have since seen a search for new policy regimes. Just prior to the pandemic, a gradual consensus seemed to emerge on (1) placing more emphasis on the use of fiscal policy rather than monetary policy for macroeconomic stabilization, (2) advancing global cooperation for decarbonization, and (3) achieving international harmonization of corporate tax rates, including digital taxation.

The pandemic caused inflation rates to surge almost everywhere, however, including even in Japan, which had been beset by deflation for many decades. Under the circumstances, there is little wonder that major countries are now fighting inflation with monetary policy. A few years from now, though, when global inflation has eased, the world will likely resume its search for a new economic policy regime. This program will analyze how such a search may unfold.

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Measures Necessary to Build a Circular Economy Society

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Principal Investigator

Hikaru Hiranuma
RESEARCH DIRECTOR

It is necessary to build a resource- and energy-recycling society that decarbonizes not only energy transitions but also the entire supply chain to achieve carbon neutrality and build a sustainable society.

This research program will present measures that Japan needs to take to achieve carbon neutrality and improve its international competitiveness in order to build a resource- and energy-recycling society.

Japan's Response to an Accelerating Global Energy Transition—A Follow-Up

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■ Principal Investigator

Hikaru Hiranuma
RESEARCH DIRECTOR

Japan's Response to an Accelerating Global Energy Transition was a three-year research program (April 2020 to March 2023) that identified the measures Japan needs to take toward carbon neutrality. A follow-up program is being implemented to further disseminate its findings and promote Japan's efforts to achieve carbon neutrality.

For details about Japan's Response to an Accelerating Energy Transition research program, visit
https://www.tokyofoundation.org/programs/detail.php?u_id=19 ▸

The Blue Economy: International Trends and the Situation in Japan—A Follow-Up

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■ Principal Investigator

Hikaru Hiranuma
RESEARCH DIRECTOR

The Blue Economy: International Trends and the Situation in Japan was a three-year research program (April 2019 to March 2022) that focused on the measures necessary to build a blue economy in Japan. A follow-up program is being implemented to further disseminate its findings and promote Japan's efforts to grow its blue economy.

For details about the Blue Economy: International Trends and the Situation in Japan research program, visit
https://www.tokyofoundation.org/programs/detail.php?u_id=18 ▸

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Talent Development for Local Healthcare DX

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Principal Investigator

Takanori Fujita
SENIOR FELLOW

As the global push for healthcare digital transformation (DX) accelerates, the need for a sustainable healthcare system in Japan is becoming more evident. This need is heightened by Japan's aging population and the looming threat of future pandemics and disasters. Drawing lessons from past failures, this research aims to establish a resilient healthcare system capable of addressing these challenges. Central to our approach is the development of a decentralized data model with exit regulations, enabling the effective use of data and the integration of emerging technologies such as generative AI and the metaverse.

This policy study focuses on:

Governance for transitioning to a decentralized data system and implementing exit regulations

Local utilization of collected data

Regional implementation of emerging technologies, incorporating perspectives on talent development Collaborating with pioneering local governments (such as Tsukuba City, Chino City, Kibi Chuo Town, Kanagawa Prefecture) and industry-academia-government consortia, the study seeks to conduct policy research that includes talent development for healthcare DX. By fostering collaboration among multidisciplinary experts and citizens, the project aims to cultivate the workforce necessary to implement healthcare DX across both urban and rural areas. The study will use a hands-on approach to generate policy recommendations and disseminate information nationally and internationally, paving the way for a universally adaptable healthcare DX initiative.

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Teachers in the AI Era

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Principal Investigator

Mina Matsumoto
RESEARCH DIRECTOR

Improvement of the quality of the compulsory education is essential to opening up the future of children of our country. To achieve this, above all, it is necessary to rebuild the system design of the teaching profession to ensure the quality of teachers. To this end, we will (1) Look back on the system design of teacher training, recruitment, training, and treatment from a historical and policy standpoint and develop a system that will allow higher education as a whole, including teacher graduate schools, to adapt to rapid social and technological changes, as well as recommend revision measures; and (2) With the cooperation of the Tokyo Board of Education, create a guidebook on mathematics that will help current teachers stand on the podium with confidence, share the process with other educators across the country, and communicate to the committee. We will proceed

with the research program with emphasis on these two points.

The issue here is the use of AI. It is necessary to understand how the government's policy of "AI in education" is having an impact on teachers.

Co-Investigator

Shigeki Kaizuka
RESEARCH DIRECTOR

Developing a Well-Being-Informed Education Package

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The concept of well-being, emphasized in the June 2021 policy announcement and increasingly integrated into domestic policies, is now also being envisioned as a central theme in education. Given the growing attention on generative AI technology with its applications in education as well as the emerging connections between arts activities and well-being in the education, this study will work on: 1. Developing an education package that fosters well-being, and 2. Exploring well-being-informed education packages for all generations. This program seeks to use generative AI as an educational tool to develop efficient personalized teaching methods, encourage dialogue with generative AI to form individual thoughts based on diverse perspectives, and utilize the art-based technique of "interactive appreciation" to foster the ability to ask questions independently. These innovative approaches will be tested in specific regions to evaluate their effectiveness in developing desired skills, and well-being as well.

Assessing the Integrated Reform of Tax and Social Security Systems in Japan 2

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■ Principal Investigator

Shigeki Morinobu
RESEARCH DIRECTOR

■ Co-Investigator

Naoki Oka
SENIOR FELLOW

The Kishida administration declared in June 2023 its readiness to take "extraordinary measures" over the next several years to stem the declining birthrate in response to the shocking report that births in Japan fell below 800,000 for the first time in 2022. The decline in the birthrate, coupled with population aging, raises serious doubts about the sustainability of the social security system, fuels public anxiety about the future, and will have a negative impact on economic growth.

This research program will examine the impact Kishida's announcement is likely to have as concrete measures are proposed and implemented.

The biggest challenge the initiative faces is the issue of financial resources. Thought is being given to adjusting expenditures and raising social insurance payments, particularly for health insurance, but a stable, permanent revenue source is needed. To this end, it is necessary to find the best mix, which may require reforms to the consumption tax, income tax, asset tax, and other taxes. To gain the public's understanding, there is also a need to present a clear picture of the benefits and burdens. The research program will invite experts to explore how such a best mix of benefits and burdens can be achieved.

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Creation of Generative AI Learning Environment for Teachers

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■ Principal Investigator

Lui Yoshida
SENIOR FELLOW

As generative AI becomes more integral to our lives, it is crucial that everyone, including teachers, not only understand but also know how to use these technologies responsibly and effectively. However, teachers, who play a key role in guiding students, are facing increasing pressures without sufficient support to adapt to these new technologies. This study aims to create a supportive learning environment specifically for teachers, helping them stay updated with the latest AI advancements and share practical knowledge with ease. By conducting surveys to identify the current use of AI in education and the needs of teachers, this study will develop online programs and platforms for teachers to learn and exchange information about AI. The goal is to ease the burden on teachers by providing them with the resources to understand and use AI effectively in their teaching without adding to their workload. Ultimately, this study hopes to improve how AI is used in education and provide policy recommendations for better supporting teachers, ensuring that they have the training and community support needed in a rapidly evolving digital age.

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Verification of New Land Legislation and Collaboration for its Dissemination

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■ Principal Investigator

Shoko Yoshihara
RESEARCH FELLOW

Against the backdrop of a declining and aging population, the increase in unkempt vacant land and land with unknown owners has become a social issue. In recent years, the Government has undertaken a fundamental review of related systems and implemented a wide range of systems, including mandatory inheritance registration. However, in local communities that are trying to use the systems, new challenges are emerging, such as the high cost of resolving land whose ownership has once become unknown, and how to secure personnel to take on the actual work given the limited personnel and financial resources of municipalities and the aging of local communities. Therefore, this study aims to verify the operational status of the new systems so that they can function effectively in the region, and to conduct a model project for practical initiatives in cooperation with local authorities and other relevant parties.

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CSR Research Project

Background and Aims

Measures to address issues like environmental degradation, poverty, and human rights had long been considered the purview of the government sector. But as the impact of corporate activities has expanded with the development of the global economy, private companies have found they could no longer ignore these issues. Public-sector initiatives alone are increasingly unable to cope with the catastrophic scale of natural disasters and the growing complexity of community-related issues. Businesses are consequently being called upon to go beyond their role as profit-making entities and to fulfill their responsibilities corporate citizens. The concept of corporate social responsibility has taken root in

Japan in recent years, with a growing number of companies introducing their CSR initiatives in their sustainability reports and on their websites. All too often, though, they are little more than lists of notable achievements, and little attention is given to the high potential these activities have to help mitigate real-life problems. This was the impetus behind our decision in 2013 to launch a project to conduct CSR research, led by a committee of practitioners and experts. The goal of the project is to further promote CSR in Japan, thereby leveraging the resources of the corporate sector to accelerate the resolution of the many issues confronting society today.

Committee of Experts (alphabetical order)

Toshio Arima
Chairman of the Board, Global Compact Network Japan

Hiroshi Komiyama (Chair)
Chairman of the Institute, Mitsubishi Research Institute, Inc.; President, Platinum Society Network; The 28th President, the University of Tokyo

Katsuhito Iwai (Acting Chair)
Distinguished Fellow, Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research; Distinguished Professor, Kanagawa University; Professor Emeritus, University of Tokyo; Fellow, Japan Academy

Mieko Nakabayashi
Executive Director (Policy Research), Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research

Yoriko Kawaguchi
Distinguished Fellow, Tokyo Foundation for Policy Research; Emerita Fellow, Musashino Institute for Global Affairs, Musashino University; Former Minister of the Environment; Former Minister for Foreign Affairs; Former Special Advisor to the Prime Minister; Former Member of the House of Councillors

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