

Living in Peace – Overcoming Hate Speech and Racial Discrimination in Japan
International House
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Section I

a. Header

above

b. Summary of the project goals

The project has two goals:(1) Research of the root causes of hate speech in Japan and effectiveness of domestic and international law against hate speech and (2) Empowerment of civil society organization and local community on human rights advocacy.

c. Did other fund-raising efforts contribute to your project? What were they?

No.

d. Project overview

1. Research of the root cause of hate speech, impact of the domestic law and international human rights advocacy on racial discrimination

I have conducted intensive research in interviewing 20 people and reading more than 50 articles and books during the project period. I could understand the background, damage and influence of hate speech in society deeply by interviewing the victims of hate speech and reading books which cover from history of ethnic minority and discrimination in Japan to legal regulation on the freedom of speech including the major judgements in the U.S. and Japan in the context of hate speech. I also collected a lot of pamphlets of civil society organizations to work on anti-racism movements, which is helpful to understand the latest civil society movement. Collecting related news articles on the issue also helped me understand public sentiment by assessing how media have treat this issue in Japan. This is of course time and money consuming process in which I needed effort and patience for this exploration. However, while collecting the materials, I could expand my networks with several NGOs and researchers who gave a good advice on my research and activities.

The informants or interviewees include various actors such as Korean residents in Japan (*Zainichi* Korean, target and victim of hate speech), government officials, lawyers, academic researchers, workers in international NGOs and people joining in counter-action against hate speech as well as information from newspapers and legal records. Interviews and background research were designed and conducted by the researcher with the help of partnering NGO IMADR and the interviews are semi-structured, conducted mostly in the form of face-to-face interviews. The information obtained in the interviews is analyzed in the context of social mobilization or social research as this study seeks to contribute to the burgeoning field of strategic human rights litigation for conflict resolution and peace building. Thanks to the partnering NGO IMADR, the interview arrangement was smooth though arranging appointments with busy interviewee within limited period was not always easy.

2. Empowerment of civil society and local communities on human rights advocacy.

I conducted 3 workshops for several types of participants. One in Kawasaki and other two were held in Tokyo. A workshop held in June 30 is targeted to academic researchers. About 10 participants including law professors, lawyers, government officials listened to my presentations and had a discussion time. The purpose of the workshop is to convey the voice of minorities who are targeted by derogatory hate speech to intellectuals and policy makes. Based on the result of my interview with the victims of hate speech, the participants had an intensive discussion on what the root cause of the discrimination and what desirable regulation on the hate speech is. Another workshop was held for children and youth in Kawasaki (I intended to make the size of workshop small so that the participants can enjoy enough interactions and deep understanding of the issue). At the youth center in Yoyogi, around 20 children and youth gathered to learn how to live together with people with different cultural backgrounds and

conflict resolution for peace. Third workshop was part of the event in which I organized with other civil society organizations and local community of Kawasaki. After having a speech of Ms. Morooka, attorney of law and advocate for anti-racism law, I facilitated the small discussion on how we can live in peace without discrimination and conflict. I also helped the organization to held the jazz music concert, "Jazz for Human Rights." In addition, the symposium for new Kawasaki City Ordinance against Hate speech will be held on September 30, which I became one of the organizes. The workshops to empower the civil society organization working for anti-hate speech and discrimination law will be held on October 1.

Section II

a. In one or two paragraphs, address each of the following questions:

- **How do you define peace?**

I define peace as the status of individuals or society in which everyone can live their own life embracing their dignity.

- **How does or will your project contribute to peace? Short-term? Long-term?**

Hate speech is extremely negative and constitutes a threat to peace as Speech as it is intended to foster hatred against groups based on race, religion, gender, sexual preference, national origin, or other traits. Ms. Morooka explains intense hate speech could lead to the genocide, which was shown in the history. Therefore, my project which aims to explore the root cause of the discrimination in the context of the hate speech will help policy makers to understand the issue structurally to make an effective measure to prevent the hate speech. Empowering the civil society organizations and local community against racism also contribute to prevent the hate speech which harm the dignity of people.

- **Has your project changed the way you think about the world? How has it changed you?**

The project changed the way I think about the world. First, after interviewing victims of hate speech, I understood how harmful the hate speech is to the peace. Hate speech not only harms individual dignity but also damage democratic society through silencing minority voices. Second, I realize there is a powerful grassroots civil society in Japan to fight against racial discrimination. Empowering this civil society organizations definitely can lead to developing the world with peace.

b. Complete this section with a one to two sentence personal statement, suitable for use as a quotation, addressing how and why this project was valuable and what was the most important thing you learned as a result. Indicate student's name for quote attribution.

"What I have learned in this project is true fear and hope. It was painful experience to listen to victims of hate speech and crime in which I felt how harmful hate speech to human dignity itself. However, I also found the hope in powerful civil society movement and collaboration to fight against hate speech and racial discrimination which is exactly embodiment of the norms in international human rights law." – Ayako Hatano.



Meeting with IMADR



Interview with Mr. Yamada working at the Kawasaki Fureai Kan (local children's care center). He is civil society activist and advocate to Kawasaki city to enhance protection of the victims of the hate speech.