Material Issue 4 Achieve a society in which diverse people can actively participate

Approach to the Material Issue

The Seven & i Group believes it is significant to realize a society in which diverse people with various backgrounds and values, including race, nationality, gender, age, religion, disability, and sexual orientation, can participate actively.

Promoting cross-cultural understanding and supporting the next generation who will create the society of the future will lead not only to the development of society as a whole but also to the provision of products and services demanded by society. We continue to promote initiatives that enable the entire society, as well as our group, to respect various values and lifestyles.

- Relevant policy

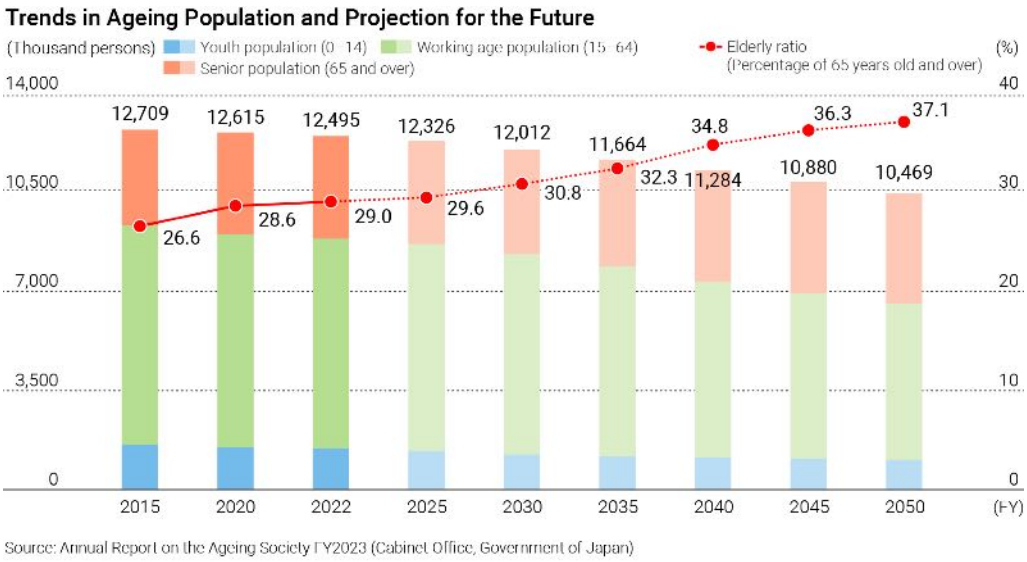
  Seven & i Group Corporate Action Guidelines >

  Seven & i Group Human Rights Policy >

Background to the Material Issue

Aging Population and Decline in Productive-Aged Population

Japan is experiencing a decline in birth rates along with an aging population, leading to a decrease in the working-age population. While the elderly population continues to grow, it is projected that by 2050, the working-age population will decrease to approximately 55.4 million (a 25.3% decrease from 2022). Supporting the development of the next generation is crucial for realizing a better society.

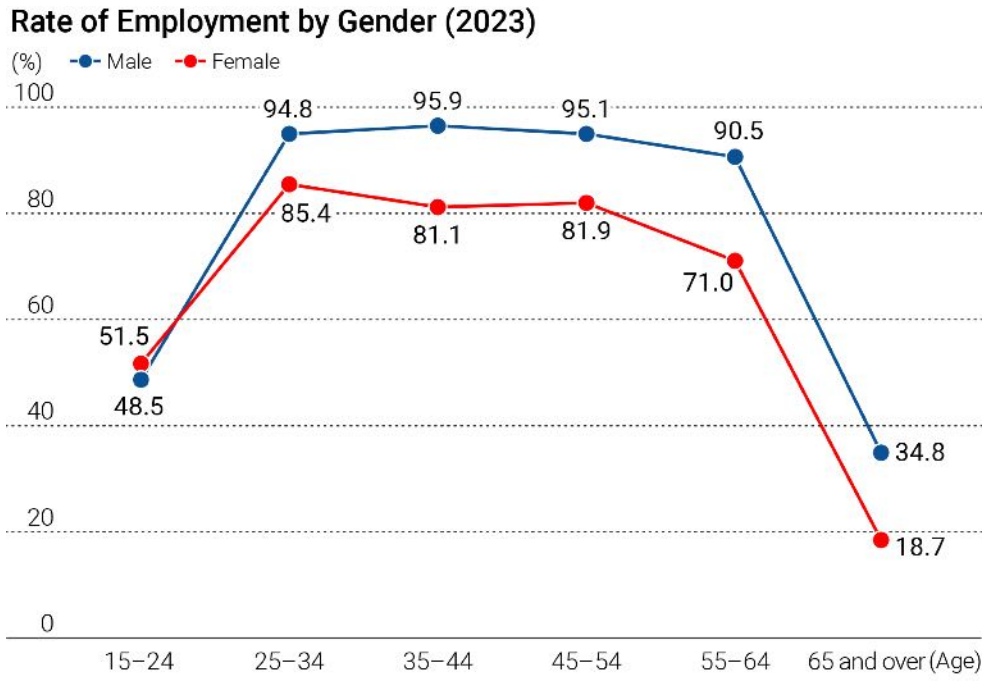


Source: Annual Report on the Ageing Society FY2023 (Cabinet Office, Government of Japan)

Supporting Active Participation of Women

As the working-age population decreases, promoting the active participation of women is essential. However, many women who wish to work are unable to do so for various reasons, such as the inability to balance childcare and work, or the difficulty in finding employment after raising children. Additionally, in Japan, the percentage of women in managerial positions is low compared to the global average: 21.1% for executives, 8.0% for department heads, 11.6% for section chiefs, and 18.7% for assistant managers. Therefore, creating a society where highly capable women can thrive remains a challenge.

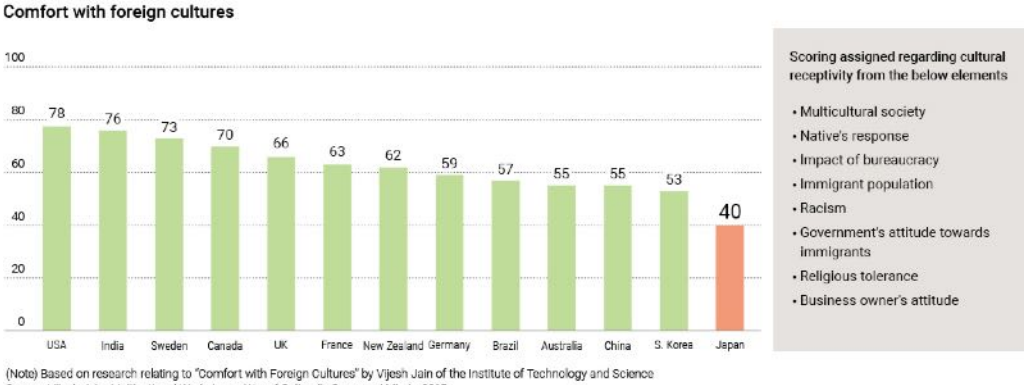
* Source: "Basic Survey of Gender Equality in Employment Management for FY 2022" (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare)



Source: 2023 Yearly Average Results, Labour Force Survey (Basic Tabulation) (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications)

Receptivity to Other Cultures

Compared to multiple countries, Japan's receptivity to cultures different from one's own is particularly low. To create a society in which diverse people can participate actively, we must respect other cultures as well.



(Note) Based on research relating to "Comfort with Foreign Cultures" by Vijesh Jain of the Institute of Technology and Science
Source: Vijesh Jain, *Multinational Workplaces: War of Culturally Seasoned Minds*, 2015

Contribution to SDGs

By addressing this material issue, the Seven & i Group will support the active participation of diverse people, including gender equality, and contribute to achieving goals 5 and 10 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Seven & i Group's Initiatives

Support the Development of the Next Generation >

Support the Development of the Next Generation

Amid the trend toward nuclear families, there are often fewer people whom parents can easily turn to with questions about raising their children. In light of this, Seven & i Group offers various types of support through its stores.

Maternity and Childcare Counseling Service

Ito-Yokado has placed maternity and childcare consultation offices. Here, consultants certified as public health nurses and midwives provide free consultations on health during pregnancy and childcare. Each of these facilities offers restrooms equipped with such conveniences as diaper-changing tables, private spaces for breastfeeding, water heaters for milk formula, and toilets for children. In addition, the consultants also collect information on the types of assistance offered by local governments and provide this information to users.

Number of Stores with Maternity and Childcare Consultation Offices

End of February 2022	End of February 2023	End of February 2024
100	98	95

Childcare consultation office

Number of Ito-Yokado Childcare Consultations (Users)

FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023
224,552	111,326*	137,559	146,210	145,815

* The number of consultations per store has continued to rise since the fiscal year ended February 28, 2022, regardless of the impact of voluntary stay-at-home practices, temporary closures as determined by stores, and permanent closures due to the spread of COVID-19, as well as closures due to structural reforms.

Supporting Pregnancy, Childbirth, and Child-Rearing through Co-Creation with Various Companies

Akachan Honpo is promoting the “with akachanhonpo” co-creation project, an initiative undertaken with various companies to solve social issues related to pregnancy, childbirth, and child-rearing. For example, the project established a community site on X (formerly Twitter) that enables anyone to feel free to ask questions to midwives and provides free specialized content prepared under the supervision of midwives about physical and mental well-being. The project continues to provide new value by solving issues related to meals and offering support for creating memories for parents and children. By transcending the boundaries of companies in this way, new products and services are created, providing unprecedented value.

Childcare Support Events

Ito-Yokado holds various events to provide childcare advice and encourage mutual interaction among parents/guardians. The company also actively takes part in events in collaboration with universities, municipalities, and several product manufacturers to maintain and promote the health of mothers, offer techniques for relaxation and rejuvenation, and provide helpful childcare-related information. The overarching theme of the events is “enjoyment at home through public-private-academic partnerships.” Through these events, it is helping to expand community childcare support networks.
Since 2021, Ito-Yokado has also started holding Kids Workplace Experience Tours, where parents and their children can enjoy learning. These tours are events where they can join workplace experience programs at Ito-Yokado and learn about such matters as store development that seeks customer satisfaction and initiatives that are considerate of hygiene management and the environment from the perspective of SDGs.
In the fiscal year ended February 29, 2024, these tours were offered at 125 Ito-Yokado stores, for a total of approximately 2,500 people, including parents/guardians and children.

Kids Workplace Experience Tour, where they learn from the perspective of SDGs

Supporting Career Education

To support career education at elementary schools, junior and senior high schools, and universities, Seven & i Group cooperates with requests from schools by sending out employees to each school, providing workplace tours, and holding workplace experience programs at its Group stores, where participants have the chance to take part in conducting familiar retail store operations.

7-Eleven Store in Shinagawa Student City

Seven-Eleven Japan has a store in Shinagawa Student City, which has been run jointly by Shinagawa-ku and Junior Achievement Japan since 2003. The concept of Shinagawa Student City is to create a virtual town inside an elementary school, with various companies setting up shops and providing experience of working and society. The children working in the 7-Eleven store experience customer service, store shelf organization, and other operations to learn about the systems of society.

Shinagawa Student City

› More details about the Student City economic activity experience can be found here (in Japanese)

Workplace Experience at Stores

Ito-Yokado accepts workplace experience programs for children, students, and pupils from educational institutions. In addition to providing opportunities to observe food processing operations and experience product display in stores, participants can also engage in activities such as sampling and sales promotions. Through these experiences, they can enjoy the process of thinking and expressing their own ideas, and understand the importance of adhering to basic safety and security measures.

Workplace Experience at Training Center

Seven & i Group training facility, Ito Training Center, provides store shelf organization and food processing experiences, as well as opportunities to provide service from various customer perspectives, such as helping customers in wheelchairs. Through these experiences, students can feel the value of working and the joy of interacting with customers.

Learning about cash registers through hands-on experience at Ito Training Center

Outreach Classes for Company-School Exchange

Seven-Eleven Japan holds outreach classes at an elementary school as a part of the Yomiuri Education Network, which seeks to increase interactions between companies and schools. Through the group work, the children come to understand in a fun way the roles that 7-Eleven plays in society. At the same time, they learn about how the products and services of 7-Eleven, which aims to build stores that are convenient and close to people, have changed (CRM strategy* and response to SDGs) in accordance with changes in society (changes in customers' needs). The class provides a good opportunity for children to think about their society from the everyday perspective of a convenience store. Additionally, through the familiar 7-Eleven stores located across the country, Seven-Eleven Japan conducts unique outreach classes that provide children, who will shape the future, with opportunities to learn about social issues related to the SDGs, think about solutions, and take action. Applications from elementary schools and other institutions nationwide are accepted through its company website.

*CRM strategy: Customer Relationship Management strategy
This is a management strategy/method aimed at expanding sales and improving profitability through improving customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Outreach class in progress

Support through Free Picture Book, Bonolon, Warrior of the Forest

Since 2005, Seven Bank has cosponsored the publication of Bonolon, Warrior of the Forest, which is a free picture book created with the hope that such qualities in the heart-warming world of Bonolon as kindness and courage will help future generations grow to have enriched minds. The bank also publishes about 3 million picture books annually and distributes them free of charge,* produces large-size picture books, holds storytelling sessions for children, and conducts other programs, promoting communications between parents and children and contributing to the healthy development of children over the 18 years since its launch.

＊ With the aim of making them readily available for children, parents, and grandparents all over Japan, copies are issued on the 15th day of every even month and distributed free of charge at 7-Eleven stores and Denny's restaurants throughout Japan as well as Akachan Honpo stores.

Storytelling session led by employee volunteers

Support for Dietary Education

Seven & i Group promotes dietary education activities for children through various experiences in order to prepare them to be people who can convey knowledge about foods and practice sound and healthy dietary habits.
For example, some Denny’s restaurants operated by Seven & i Food Systems regularly hold dietary education classes for children. These classes are opportunities for children to learn about how to use chopsticks, knives, forks, and spoons as well as proper table posture and other basic etiquette. They are also opportunities to learn in an enjoyable way through explanations using ingredient-themed panels and quizzes on seasonal vegetables, and more. While stores have refrained from holding face-to-face classes to prevent the spread of COVID-19 since 2020, it holds dietary education classes via online meeting tools.
In addition, some Ito-Yokado stores regularly carry out dietary education events. At this event, participants learn the importance of well-balanced food through cooking demonstrations and menu suggestions in cooking areas set up in-store, as well as traditional culture such as the Doll Festival through food.

Dietary education class

D&I Training Conducted to Teach the Key Points of Communicating with Diverse People

Seven-Eleven Japan conducted D&I training for employees who work at stores as an opportunity to learn the key points of communciating with diverse customers and employees including seniors, persons with disabilities, and foreign residents and employees. Seminars and group sessions deepen participants' understanding. Part of the training included incorporating the Job Supporter for Persons with Mental Developmental Disabilities training held by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, which was attended by 255 persons through the end of February 2024. In the future, the company will continue to support interactions by personnel with diverse people, efforts aimed at better communciations, and the creation of a society where all people can live comfortably.