

## 8. Japan's Report

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### Visit to Japanese Hospital (Nerima Hikarigaoka Hospital)

I visited Nerima Hikarigaoka Hospital on Nov 29. The hospital is located in Nerima Ward, Tokyo, Japan, and it was reformed in 2022. I felt that the equipment in the hospital was very new, and the kitchen where meals were prepared was fully equipped. At that hospital, I learned about the compassion of dietitians who put patients first.

The first thing that I learned is that dietitians are careful about the position when patients are eating on the bed and the environment. In terms of nutritional management, it did not come to my attention to the position that patients eat, but after the visit, I realized its importance. I learned that I must be careful that patients do not press her/his stomach with her/his legs when is sit on the bed. Regarding the environment, I learned that patients eating with other people in the cafeteria would lead to the enjoyment of their meals. The second thing that I learned was that the appearance of food is important for patients as it is one of the factors that greatly influences appetite. In particular, in a dysphasia diet, if the food is put in a blender, various ingredients are mixed, and the color will be bad. At this hospital, I felt that it looked good because it was well-colored and kept in shape. The third thing that I learned was that some of the vegetables grown indoors which were grown by dietitians are used to prepare the patient's lunch. I thought it was a very good idea and I thought that patients were happy to be able to eat fresh vegetables, even though the amount was limited. In this way, I felt that this hospital not only manages the nutrition of patients but also provides care considering how to make patients happy.



**Fig 1. Vegetables grown in the dietitian's room.**

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### Visit to primary school for school lunch (Funabori Primary School)

There were two things that impressed me the most when I saw the school lunch program. The first was to create a menu without using ready-to-use products. The second thing is that there was very little leftover food. I provide school lunches at a special needs school, and I often use ready-to-use products. This is because the use of these products reduces the burden of cooking work and is less time-consuming, otherwise, we won't be able to finish making school lunches on time. Moreover, they even made their own desserts such as melon bread using Komatsuna, a local vegetable. In addition, there was a wide variety of menus, and dishes from various countries were incorporated into the menu. I felt that incorporating a variety of menus into school lunches would help children accept and understand diverse cultures. In order to provide such a wide variety of menus prepared by hand, I feel that the cooperation of the cooks and kitchen staff is indispensable. I could imagine the dietitian actively communicating with the cooks daily by explaining the purpose of that day's meal and asking for their cooperation. In Japan, school lunches are called "living teaching materials". This is because, through the actual school lunches provided, children can learn such as appropriate meal intake, food culture, and manners during the meal. I felt that the school lunch of Funabori Elementary School reaches the standards of "living teaching materials". In addition to food culture, they provide school lunches related to seasons, as well as incorporate the SDGs, which is a hot topic at present. In addition, I felt that the Principal of the school and other teachers understand the intentions of the dietitian and are reflected in the education of children. In this way, I felt that the cooperation with other teachers on school lunches led to the low of leftovers among children.



**Fig 2. Amount of leftover food for one class**

**Kick-off meeting of AYDN**

At this meeting, information was shared and discussed on the food culture of the twelve countries that participated, major nutritional issues, and the situation of dietitians. The most interesting topic for me was whether dietitians are respected or not in their countries. When I work as a dietitian in Japan, I sometimes feel a lack of respect. Therefore, I was very interested in the situation of dietitians in other Asian countries. When asked about the opinions of other countries, some of them felt respected. For this reason, I thought that dietitians in Japan were necessary to

make more appeal. As the discussion during the meeting suggested, dietitians need to write and publish more papers. Dietitians in Japan conduct research and make presentations. However, I feel that there are many cases where the presentations are made only in the local area or inside Japan without spreading the outcome of the research abroad. I think that dietitians in Japan need to look more abroad and actively disseminate information. I hope that through this network, countries will be able to work together to find a way to solve their nutrition challenges and to give back what they have learned to their own countries.