

GLOBAL VOICES PROJECT
MR. SHINJI KUBO, UNHCR JAPAN
ACE BLOG, MEIJI UNIVERSITY

Global Voices Transcript

My name is Shinji Kubo. I am the Senior External Relations Officer for UNHCR representation in Japan.

Daisuke Yagishita, ACE Student: *What is one of the most rewarding experiences you have had while working at the UNHCR?*

Mr. Shinji Kubo, UNHCR: We are a UN **refugee protection agency**, so whenever we can see a solution for our refugee **clients**, that is the most rewarding moment. We are talking about three different ways of providing solutions for refugee problems. One is, of course, for them to return to their **home countries** based on their own decisions. This would be one of the fantastic solutions. So, if we could see that, we would be very happy. Another way of finding a solution is, of course, to find a **third country**, which would give our refugees a chance to start new lives in another country. So, **whenever** we have come to that **stage**, seeing refugees going home or going to another country, that is one of the most rewarding moments for us.

Daisuke Yagishita, ACE Student: *What inspired you to join the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)?*

Mr. Shinji Kubo, UNHCR: Well, when I was a university student, we saw a great number of refugees who were being **displaced** in the region, in the Asia region (Southeast Asia), and you know, we had a very strong **image** of those people, children, mothers, women, being displaced. And I felt that this is something that people should look at, and I thought that this was one of the ways that I could **achieve** myself in my professional **career**. Later, in the early 1990s, the UNHCR was **headed** by a Japanese woman who is now the President of JICA, Madame Ogata. And that has also had a lot of **encouragement** for many Japanese, including myself, to be proud of working for an organization like UNHCR.

Daisuke Yagishita, ACE Student: *This year is the 60th anniversary of the beginning of UNHCR. Would you please comment on this fact?*

Mr. Shinji Kubo, UNHCR: After World War Two in 1951, the international community **created** an organization called the United Nations High **Commissioner** for Refugees. Sixty years have passed, and the international community is **facing** increasingly more challenging situations because of the **enormous** amount of difficulty that people are suffering from. And the refugees are part of them, and without finding **durable** solutions for this group of people who have no home to return to, who have no future, who have no one to listen to their voices, would be a major problem for us. So, this is a great opportunity after sixty years since the organization was created, that we look at refugee situations in whatever way that we can and **consider** that there is something we can do, even just to talk about refugees, just to read about refugee problems. We call it “**Do one thing this year.**” And I would really encourage you to start talking about refugee situations in your own way and that should continue for a long, long time.

Daisuke Yagishita, ACE Student: Thank you very much, Kubo-san, for coming today and taking the time to be with us.