Dr. Yoko Fujikake

Cultural & Development Anthropologist | Gender and Development | Paraguay

Professor, Institute of Urban Innovation
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Dr. Yoko Fujikake receiving the FY2026 Foreign Minister's Commendation from Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, Tokyo, 1 October 2026.

More than 30 years of research, education and international cooperation connecting Japan and Paraguay



Laboratory | YNU Researcher Profile | Paraguay Project

Research, Education and Social Practice

Dr. Yoko Fujikake is a cultural and development anthropologist specializing in Gender and Development (GAD), women's and children's empowerment, social inclusion, participatory rural development, qualitative evaluation, and Paraguay/Latin American studies. Her work combines long-term ethnographic fieldwork with action-oriented research, education and social implementation.

Her engagement with Paraguay began in January 1994 through the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) program. Over more than three decades, she has worked with rural women, children, young people, universities, local governments and communities, linking anthropological theory with practical development cooperation.

YNU × JICA Grassroots Technical Cooperation

2016–2021: Improving the Quality of Life of Rural Women in Paraguay: Weaving Dreams from Yokohama. The project strengthened food processing, product development, marketing, organizational management and women's empowerment.

2022–2025: Integrated Rural Development in Paraguay: Toward the Development of Agritourism. The second phase connected women's empowerment with agritourism, local resources, community development and planetary health.



Dr. Fujikake with YNU students and project participants at IKOI in La Colmena, Paraguay, 2026.

Since 2013, YNU students have participated in field-based learning in Paraguay, connecting anthropology, gender studies and international cooperation with direct engagement in local communities.

2026 Highlight I: Their Imperial Highnesses at IKOI

On 22 August 2026, Their Imperial Highnesses Crown Prince and Crown Princess Akishino visited La Colmena during their official visit to Paraguay marking the 90th anniversary of Japanese immigration. Dr. Fujikake welcomed Their Imperial Highnesses at IKOI, the tourism information center developed through the YNU × JICA grassroots cooperation project.



Dr. Fujikake welcoming Their Imperial Highnesses Crown Prince and Crown Princess Akishino in La Colmena, Paraguay, 22 August 2026. Photo courtesy of the Imperial Household Agency.

At IKOI, Their Imperial Highnesses viewed products developed by local women and learned about the project's achievements. The visit highlighted the long-term collaboration among local communities, Paraguayan partner institutions, YNU and JICA.

Yokohama National University: Visit to IKOI

2026 Highlight II: Honor al Mérito in Paraguay

On 1 September 2026, Dr. Yoko Fujikake received the **Honor al Mérito** from Universidad Nihon Gakko in Paraguay. The distinction recognized her contribution to higher education, research and university extension, as well as her long-term work to improve the quality of life of rural women in Paraguay.



Dr. Yoko Fujikake receiving the Honor al Mérito at Universidad Nihon Gakko, Paraguay, 1 September 2026.

The award reflects a sustained academic and community partnership with Paraguayan universities and local communities, and the reciprocal relationship between research and practice that has shaped Dr. Fujikake's work.

YNU Researcher Profile - publications and achievements

2026 Highlight III: Foreign Minister's Commendation

On 1 October 2026, Dr. Yoko Fujikake received the FY2026 Foreign Minister's Commendation from Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi. The commendation recognized her longstanding contribution to friendship between Japan and Paraguay and to the advancement of international cooperation through research, education and community-based practice.



Dr. Yoko Fujikake receiving the FY2026 Foreign Minister's Commendation from Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi.





FY2026 Foreign Minister's Commendation ceremony, Tokyo.

Yokohama National University: Foreign Minister's Commendation

Selected Recent Publications

Fujikake, Y. (2026). “Weaving Dreams with ‘Rural Women’ in Paraguay: Bridging Theory and Practice” [Japanese]. In H. Sekine (Ed.), *What Is Development Anthropology? Connecting, Coexistence, and Advocacy*. Kokon Shoin. Chapter 9. ISBN 978-4-7722-3209-8.

The chapter examines rural women’s empowerment and international cooperation in Paraguay through the reciprocal movement between anthropological theory and development practice.

YNU publication record

Fujikake, Y., Ishikawa, M., Miura, R., Tanaka, S., Fujioka, Y., & Oikawa, H. (Eds.). (2026). *Rethinking Cities through Planetary Health: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Cities, Environment, and Human Life* [Japanese]. Akashi Shoten. ISBN 978-4-7503-6085-0.

Dr. Fujikake co-edited the volume and contributed the introduction, Chapter 1, and the concluding chapter. Chapter 1 examines children’s community spaces through a planetary-health perspective, beginning with experiences in rural Paraguay and extending to knowledge co-creation and practice in Yokohama.

Akashi Shoten - official book page

Selected Current Research Themes

- Cultural anthropology and development anthropology
- Gender and Development (GAD) and women’s empowerment
- Participatory rural development, livelihoods and agritourism
- Social inclusion, qualitative evaluation and action-oriented research
- Paraguay and Latin American area studies
- Planetary health, urban studies and community-based social implementation

Key Links

Dr. Yoko Fujikake Laboratory

Yokohama National University - Researcher Profile

YNU - Their Imperial Highnesses’ visit to IKOI

YNU - FY2026 Foreign Minister’s Commendation

JICA Yokohama - Paraguay project completion report

Paraguay Rural Women Project

Akashi Shoten - Planetary Health volume

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