(1) Activity Report

JAPAN OSAKA  Study-abroad Fair in Indonesia

In May, four study-abroad students were selected by OFIX to participate in the Indonesia student exchange portion of the study-in-Osaka promotion campaign "JAPAN OSAKA Study-abroad Fair in Indonesia," and spent between June and September preparing. Two of them participated in the Bandung Exchange on September 20 (Indonesia University of Education) and the fair event on the 21st (Bandung Institute of Technology). The fair included exhibition panels and videos promoting Osaka's charms, and seminars about personal experiences as foreign students in Japan and scholarships. The students took part in panel discussions about student life in Japan and answered questions from students who plan to come to Japan to study.

Student Report

Eirene Putri Suliyanto  Osaka University Graduate School of Language and Culture

I promoted the OFIX study-abroad counselling corner at the student exchange fair held at Indonesia University of Education with my professors from Indonesia and Japan, and Ms. Umeda.

At the fair Ms. Umeda and I took part in the panel discussion and explained how to study in order to come to Japan as a student and about student life in Osaka. This was my first time to address a crowd of over 1000 people, so I was nervous, but looking at the faces of the front-row students, I saw that they understood what I was saying and it helped me relax, knowing that my message was getting through.

After the panel discussion we held the study-abroad seminar. The seminar room was packed with 40 students. I talked about my life in Osaka as a study-abroad student and about scholarships. So many students asked questions during the Q&A session that I was surprised at how much they were interested in studying abroad. The questions ranged from daily life to religion to scholarships.

At the OFIX study-abroad counselling corner many students asked me questions, such as, how did you learn Japanese, how is your daily life like as an overseas student, what are you studying at your university, etc. I feel I was able to answer their questions effectively because I talked about my own experiences and the details of my life.

I found it very satisfying to be able to share my experiences with many people, and I gained an understanding of what Indonesian students expect from study in Japan, and what they need. I believe my experience as a bridge between Japan and Indonesia was particularly fulfilling.

Ayaka Umeda  Osaka University School of Foreign Studies  Bahasa Indonesia Major

What impressed me was that so many Indonesian students are interested in Japan. Many asked practical questions about scholarships and language proficiency tests, showing how serious they were with their intention of studying in Japan. The student interpreters from the Indonesia University of Education and Bandung Institute of Technology spoke fluent Japanese. I was inspired to see students my age studying foreign cultures and making use of what they have studied. I was also amazed at the popularity of Japanese idols and anime. There were many students were cosplaying, even Muslim girls. It felt that it may be one expression of Islam that is very Indonesian. It was only a short 3 days, but I experienced many inexpressibly valuable things during that time.

Sakai City Community Volunteer Interpreter Training

To enable foreign residents to live at ease, OFIX and the city of Sakai co-hosted a Community Interpreter Volunteers training session on Sept. 7 with the purpose of training community interpreter volunteers, who would become bridges of communication. There were 31 participants.

The session was led by Ms. Noriko Muramatsu, a Spanish-language counsellor with the Hyogo International Association. She explained the nature of community interpretation activities and the necessary attitude, and led the roleplay exercises while undertaking case studies according to the level and experience of each participant. Despite difficult terminology and nervousness, participants found the exercises very informative.

For details and recounts from the participants, please see the Sakai City International Volunteer newsletter Onigiri Vol.8, which will be uploaded in mid-November.
Counselling for Foreigners Co-hosted by OFIX
OFIX and municipal international exchange associations co-hosted a counselling session for foreign residents.

Association for Toyonaka Multicultural Symbiosis
ATOMS always keeps a counselling booth open, but on Oct. 25 (Sat.) held the One-day Counselling and Information Service for Foreigners at Noda Elementary School. Lawyers, doctors, notary publics, and educators answered questions from foreigners with the help of OFIX volunteer interpreters (in 9 languages). Multicultural and international understanding educational events were also held for school children, and many locals came.

Izumisano Cross-cultural Association
On Oct. 28 (Tue.) we co-hosted a session on education, child-rearing, and daily life with ICA, the board of education, and education research council.

Sessions will be held on Nov. 18 (Tue.) at Ikeda City Hall and on Jan. 25 (Sun.) at the Suita International Friendship Association.

Earthquake/Tsunami Experience
On Oct. 19 (Sun.) a charter bus with 20 Japanese and 20 foreigners left Kishiwada Station for Osaka City Life Safety Learning Center and the Tsunami/Storm Surge Disaster Prevention Station.

With all of the "unimaginable" disasters striking Japan recently, this learning experience with simulated disasters is especially useful for foreign residents seeking to prevent catastrophe.

The Magnitude 7 Earthquake Experience was particularly impressive. The Emergency Rescue corner taught valuable skills that would be immediately useful. It was satisfying to be able to experience over ten different simulations.

Trainee from Shanghai
Mike
The arrival of Typhoon Phanphone near Kishiwada made the Tsunami/Storm Surge Disaster Prevention Station feel timely. The realistic footage in the Dynacube Tsunami Theater Experience will surely be useful in a disaster.

Employees at both facilities kindly spoke in simple Japanese so that foreign residents (of 5 nationalities) could understand.

Most questionnaire respondents believed the experiences were useful.

(2) Osaka Invitational Program for Short-Term Overseas Trainees in Architecture and Arts
The 22nd annual Osaka Invitational Program for Short-Term Overseas Trainees has welcomed 8 architecture or art students from 7 countries, bringing the total number of students to 200. The program was from Sept. 25 to Oct. 24. The aim of the program is to give asian youth the opportunity to learn about Japanese architecture and arts using the secondary prize when Architect Tadao Ando won the 1st Carlsberg Architecture Competition, and donations from companies who agree with the program's goals. In this way, the youth would be able to deepen their understanding of Japanese culture and be able to contribute to the development of architecture and arts in their countries.

At the Osaka Prefecture Government Training, which started this year, the trainees learned about different systems, such as, city planning, development approval, and building confirmation, and about Osaka's Grand Design. With the cooperation of Osaka Prefecture and Tondabayashi City, they were able to visit redevelopment and cultural treasure preservation sites.

At the 10-day training they had at Obayashi Corporation, Zenitaka Corporation, Takenaka Corporation and Daiwa House Industry, they were taught many things. They learned about the latest technology, visited construction sites and conducted design work at the design division.

Their courtesy visit to Tadao Ando's office, which was also televised, was a very memorable event as they were encouraged by Mr. Ando: "Don't be afraid of risk. Dream and go for it." They visited the Shiba Ryotaro Memorial Museum and Awaji Yumebutai, which was a valuable experience to learn about Mr. Ando's architecture. Furthermore, this year, the trainees enjoyed the essence of Tadao Ando's architecture when they visited the Benesse Site Naoshima, where rich nature and traditional living are fused with modern art.

The trainees also gave a presentation on the topic of "Restoration and Preservation of Architecture in a Sustainable World Environment". Opinions were shared and an academic discussion was conducted.

In a meeting with architecture major students of Kinki University, friendly exchange through group presentations of a certain theme was accomplished.

They experienced Japanese family and culture and were able to make good memories during their homestay. Many people helped in putting this 1 month program together, where the trainees were able to learn not just about architecture, but it also became an opportunity for them to experience Osaka culture.

From the Trainees

The Courtesy Visit to Mr. Ando (Trainee from Shanghai)

Mr. Ando was very down-to-earth and talked about many things. He has a vision for Japan's place in the future world, and I enjoyed hearing about his creative process in his Shanghai projects.

The Program Overall (Trainee from Nepal)

I learned many skills from the lectures, on-site training, and programs. The opportunity to learn and experience Japanese culture, tradition, art, and architecture was also very fulfilling.
To promote international understanding education, there are about 80 international students and residents (21 countries and regions) in Osaka registered as International Understanding Education Foreign Supporters at OFIX. From among them, we will introduce 3 international students.

**Yu Zhou (China) Kansai University Graduate School of East Asian Cultures Cultural Interaction Studies Major**

Hello, I'm Zhou Yu, from Chongqing, China. I'm a second-year MA student at Kansai University. I've been in Japan for a year now. Chongqing is in the ancient kingdom of Shu, in the Romance of the Three Kingdoms. It is a beautiful place with its mountains and the Yangzi River. Chongqing is also known as the “city that never sleeps” because of its spectacular nightscapes. Chongqing and Sichuan are also home to Sichuan cuisine; mapo dofu, double cooked pork, and dandan noodles are best known in Japan.

Recently I went to Moriguchi Elementary School as a Supporter. I had a great time with the children. They were adorable and innocent. I couldn't sleep the night before for fear they wouldn't understand my Japanese, but it didn't matter how good or bad my Japanese was, as long as we interacted heart-to-heart. Time flies when you're having fun! I was deeply impressed by the teachers who coordinate the international understanding education program. The experience will be a great memory for me.

I would like to introduce the sights of the inland regions and rivers of China, minority cultures, customs, daily life, and dances of China in International Understanding Education classes in the future.

**Nguyen Thi Hien Luong (Vietnam) Osaka University School of Economics Economics Major**

Hello, I'm Luong from Vietnam. I arrived in Japan in April 2011, and am now in my third year as an Osaka University economics major. I love Japanese ramen.

I was sent to an elementary school as a Supporter in June. This was not my first time to tell children about Vietnam, but this was the first time I was allowed to choose what I thought would be interesting to tell them. When I heard that the children were interested enough in Vietnam to do some prior research, I was deeply moved. Looking back, I didn't have that kind of initiative and curiosity when I was their age. It's impressive that even young children in Japan have an outlook of wanting to understand the cultures of the world. I'm sure they will grow up to be global citizens.

As a student there are not a lot of large-scale things I can do, but I can introduce Vietnamese culture and the contrast with Japanese culture. I don't dance, so I can't demonstrate traditional Vietnamese dances, but I can teach Vietnamese songs, children’s games, and home-style cooking. If I can introduce these things to Japanese children, I think I can make a contribution to improving mutual cultural understanding.

**Pankratova Snezhanna (Russia) Osaka University School of Foreign Studies Japanese Major**

Hello, I'm Pankratova Snezhanna, and I'm in my second year as a foreign studies major at Osaka University. This is my third year in Japan. Before I came to Japan, I could imagine only bowing, Japanese companies, and geisha. Actually living here has helped me get rid of simplistic stereotypes. Most Japanese people, however, probably think of Russia as being cold and far. I became a Supporter to help people gain a broader understanding of Russia. I was surprised at how much some of the students knew when I told high school students in Yao about Russia in September.

I would like to continue introducing students to Russia as International Understanding Education: commonalities between Japan and Russia, the seasons in Russia, Russian manners, etc. I hope I can make Russia feel more familiar!

**(4) Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents**

**Japanese Language Study**

The Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents receives many inquiries from people who want to study Japanese. The reasons for studying vary, but they are all intent on learning Japanese. Some want to take the Japanese Language Proficiency Exam. Others want to intensively study to get a job. Some are mothers looking for a place to study where they can bring their children, and there are also children who have just arrived in Japan and looking for a place to study Japanese.

There are different Japanese language schools and language classrooms in Osaka. In language schools is a facility where you take short to long term classes and you pay tuition fee. On the other hand, languages classrooms are learning opportunities offered by NPOs, volunteers, and international associations. Generally, they are held 1-2 times a week. If you want to know more about Japanese language classrooms, international associations in your areas provide this information. You can also search for a language classroom by searching “Center for Adult Learning, Literacy & Japanese as a Second Language”. Click “Search for Classroom”.

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Osaka People Active in the World
Senior Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (Republic of Fiji / waterworks)  Hajime Nozaki

Engaged in waterworks for a long time. From July 2013, went to Fiji as a Senior Overseas Volunteer (waterworks).

Motivation for becoming a JICA volunteer
During my working life I dealt mostly with blueprints and machines, so I wanted to work with people as a volunteer and have a direct impact on their lives after I retired. I saw a poster for the JICA Senior Volunteers, and decided I wanted to do something for people in developing countries. I love being able to put my experience and skills to use, and the slogan "Be proud to be Japanese, proud to work with the locals" convinced me to join. I thought serving others while I lived abroad for the first time would also help me to grow as a person.

Life and activities in Fiji
Fiji is a small island country to the north of New Zealand. It has about the same land area as Shikoku, and a population of around 850,000, about the same as Sakai City. It has a warm, pleasant climate with an annual average temperature around 30 ℃, and there are always pineapples and papayas for sale at the market. The major industries are sugarcane and tourism. Many visitors from overseas come to Fiji and the beautiful islands surrounding it.

A truck for carrying sugar canes. It is related to a sugar manufacturing company in Lautoka, where I live.

Most of the JICA volunteer activities in Fiji are educational or industrial in nature, such as school education, environmental education, or agricultural instruction. I'm engaged in improving the waterworks, particularly reducing leakage. The leakage rate is currently 50%, so that half of all water is wasted. My mission is to address this problem.

Because the waterworks of Fiji is a gravity flow system, utilizing difference in elevation, the facilities are located in the mountain.

Future activities
Fijians are jolly, lively, friendly people. The pace of work is slow, but they have a strong sense of responsibility. I take the time to enjoy my work along with them. When the water pipes improve and the water reaches the homes in the village, everyone is overjoyed. Seeing people smile motivates me to keep up my work so that I can bring smiles to more people.

There is now running water.

The major sports in Fiji are rugby and sevens (rugby with seven players), and Fiji makes it to the world championships every year. When you cheer for Japan, making its first appearance in the world championships this time, please remember to cheer for Fiji, too!

Editor’s Note
Recently, I went to Korea for the first time. It is the closest country to Japan and I thought that there would be a lot of similarities, but I was surprised to see many differences. For example, Koreans have more skinship. It’s things like this that makes travelling overseas interesting. Whenever you travel, don’t just watch the scenery and buy souvenirs. Do look at the people and culture, too. (Tan)