OFIX conducted a basic study on foreigner consultation in Osaka Prefecture to direct an effective strategy for sequentially establishing a consultation desk for foreigners in the municipal offices or International Associations, targeting over 1000 foreigners in 24 cities. We would like to thank everyone who helped us in conducting the questionnaire study, hearings and 3 general meetings.

From the study, we learned that there is a big difference in the way of thinking regarding foreigner consultation between cities that have consultation desks and those that don’t.

In cities that have consultation desks, they consider looking for a foreigner who would be a key person. On the other hand, cities without consultation desks do not even understand the needs of foreigners.

In addition to the many consultations about visa status, there was an increase in consultations regarding health insurance and insurance payments, as well as consultations on daily living topics, such as medicine, school and education, taxes, public housing, and moving procedures. Moreover, consultations regarding DV and divorce, child rearing and unemployment are getting complicated.

In cities with consultation desks, the counselor goes to the divisions that need help. Cities without consultation desks devise ways, such as preparing a sample form in English for divisions where many foreigners inquire at.

Regarding PR, multilingual information is provided at the consultation desk, but there is a limit to translating documents to different languages and a common problem for all municipalities is how to disseminate the information to the foreigners. It was discovered that placing information materials and posters in Japanese language classrooms and public facilities, churches, ethnic restaurants, etc. was effective.

Tasks given were searching for a counselor who could respond to foreigners in their native language, discovering a key person from groups related with foreigners, such as the foreign community, volunteer or residents' association, the lack of information routes to disseminate administrative and disaster information, the creation of a multilingual disaster prevention guide and map, conducting disaster drills for foreigners with interesting common themes on measures to take during a disaster. It was concluded that the common task for all is the future enhancement of the common base (liaison committee meetings, etc.) that would provide services in accordance with the needs of the community, including the expansion of the consultation desk.

OFIX will use the results of the study to enhance our programs, such as the 1-day consultation and Disaster Volunteer program.

You can download the report from the OFIX HP (http://www.ofix.or.jp/pdf/news20150120.pdf)

(2) Activity Report

■ 1-Day Consultation for Foreigners Co-sponsored by Local Municipalities

OFIX provides information and consultation in 9 languages to foreigners in Osaka Prefecture. We have placed 2 Counselors to respond to a wide variety of questions from foreigners. Last fiscal year, there were about 1,400 inquiries, of which 33% are about administrative procedures. If foreign residents could only obtain information or consult with the local municipality, which is closest to them, they could probably live more at ease. It is expected that there would be many foreigners who will live in Osaka Prefecture. The co-sponsored 1-Day Consultation will continually be offered to hear out the voices of foreign residents and as a foundation for the framework in establishing multi-cultural symbiosis.

The following are the 1-Day Consultations for foreigners co-sponsored by the local municipalities.

Oct. 25 (Sat.) Association for Toyonaka Multicultural Symbiosis (English, Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, Thai, Filipino, Indonesian)
Oct. 28 (Tue.) Izumisano Cross-cultural Association (English, Chinese, Portuguese)
Nov. 18 (Tue.) Ikeda City Hall (English, Chinese, Indonesian [Spanish, Portuguese, Thai, Vietnamese])
Jan. 25 (Sun.) Suita International Friendship Association (English, Chinese, Korean, Thai [Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnam])
Feb. 1 (Sun.) Kawachinagano International Friendship Association (English, Chinese, Spanish, Portuguese)

*[-] telephone consultations

The language and content of the consultation were decided after a discussion between OFIX and the organizations and concluding what the needs are. After all the consultations were over, a reflection meeting was held on Feb. 19 where OFIX and the organizations reported on how the consultation could be improved in the future in terms of operation, promotion, etc. Municipalities and International Associations have suggested that each decide on a field to tackle and order of implementation. We will be developing the 1-day consultation to a program foreign residents could easily utilize, regardless of the municipal framework.
On Jan. 16, 23 and 30, a training was held with the aim of training community interpreter volunteers who will become bridges of communication for foreign residents in Toyonaka City, to make living easier for them. There were 24 participants of 5 languages.

The 3 trainings started off with lectures on the current situation of foreigners and the volunteer system. Ms. Hisako Sonozaki was invited to lecture about the attitude of a community interpreter. Participants were also able to experience what it would feel like in the field through a mock translation. They learned sometimes there are simple words that are difficult to interpret and the interpretation does not go smoothly.

Comments from the participants include, “I heard that there are many foreign women who get pregnant, give birth and raise children right after they come to Japan. As a mother myself, it is my wish to be even a little help to them,” “I was nervous and the actual interpretation was difficult, but I understood the importance of experience. Experience and preparation are important, aside from language proficiency.”

### Association for Toyonaka Multicultural Symbiosis Community Interpreter Volunteer Training (Co-sponsored by OFIX)

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### 22nd One World Festival

The One World Festival, an event held every year since 1993 on the theme "Encounter, Feel, and Learning from each other", with the purpose of informing Osaka residents of the tasks faced by the international society and the importance of international cooperation, was held on Feb. 7 (Sat.) and 8 (Sun.). This year’s venue was the Kansai Telecasting Corporation Ogimachi Square, Kitakumin Center, and Ogimachi park. For the 2 days, there was a total of 389 volunteers and 173 organizations who participated. The event was successful having welcomed a total of 26,000 visitors (last year there were 17,500). Many people enjoyed the various activities, the explanation of activities of NGOs and NPOs, the ethnic food booths, the talk sessions and the movies. On the main stage, Bobby Orogon and others talked about the condition of developing countries, the life of the locals and the activities of Japanese there. Also, Karen Michibata, the main guest, was welcomed and the Foreign Affairs Department and JICA discussed about the beginnings of International Cooperation.

### Overseas Study Forum

On Feb. 8 (Sun.) the "Overseas Study Forum: Towards a New Horizon" was held together with the "Osaka Global School" orientation held by the Osaka Prefectural Internationalization Strategy Executive Committee.

In this year’s forum, we have invited 5 presenters, graduates of the Osaka Global School UK and US Courses. They talked about their experiences during the Osaka Global School overseas training. One graduate talked about her experience in the Philippines.

A German student who came to Japan to study talked about what studying in Japan meant to her. Afterwards, a discussion was conducted with the presenters. A professional who had been active overseas as an opera singer also joined the panel.

There were about 130 participants in the forum. Not only students, but also the parents and guardians listened intently to what the presenters had to say. In the questionnaire after the forum, participants gave comments such as, "(this forum) was an opportunity for me to think about overseas study and my future" and "I've gained a more positive perspective of overseas study". A parent also commented, "Thank you for sharing your valuable experience."

The Forum may also be viewed on YouTube. (https://www.youtube.com/user/osakaglobal/videos)

### Overseas Emigrants Family Association Lecture

On February 18 (Wed.) the Overseas Emigrants Family Association Lecture was held at My Dome Osaka. Member Mitsuteru Sato gave a lecture entitled, "Japanese School and Japanese Language School". Mr. Sato was a principal at Asuncion Japanese School in Paraguay for 3 years from 1991. After his term, he came back to Japan and later returned to Paraguay to work as a Nikkei community Senior Volunteer in charge of Japanese language education at the Lapaz school and 5 other schools.

Mr. Sato clearly explained the exchange with the overseas emigrants through calligraphy classes, the roving classroom where the whole school from Grade 1 to 6 toured the ruins for a few days by bus, the exchange with local students, Sumo match, and Seniors club's activities.

Kenji Ryu, who worked at the Rio de Janeiro Japanese School in Brazil, also talked about school life and how exchange between local schools is being conducted through soccer and other sports because of the internationalization of students, as there are many emigrants from Germany and the US. Many members missed the old times. It was a meaningful lecture that considers the education situation of and the ideal way of teaching Japanese as a foreign language to those of Japanese descent.
Career Counseling for International Students (Job-Hunting Sonic in Harukas)

Job hunting of students graduating in 2016 started from March 1, 3 months later than usual. To initiate this, the Job-Hunting Sonic in Harukas, which is sponsored by the Osaka Prefecture Small Business Associations, was held on Feb. 14 (Sat.). It was a venue for students in universities in the Kinki region to understand more of smaller businesses before they started job hunting. 753 students (728 Japanese and 25 international students) attended the event. OFIX has been holding a career counseling for international students living at the Orion International House since 2011, but this is the first time for OFIX to co-sponsor this kind of event. 16 students visited the Career Counseling Booth for international students and consulted about how job hunting should be viewed and how to acquire the necessary visa status after being hired. By moving to a wider stage as compared to Orion International House, this year had the most number of participants as compared to the past attendance. Furthermore, many students joined the “Japanese language Business Manners” and “Interview” Courses and learned many things in preparation for job hunting from March 1.

Notice

The OFIX Official Facebook Page

OFIX has opened its official Facebook page on February 3.

We will be posting news of activities, calls for new residents for the Orion International Hall, and information about volunteer activities.

Please like our Facebook Page and get the latest information from us.

(https://www.facebook.com/osakafoundation)

Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

Immigration Law will Change from April 1, 2015

The revised Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act, aimed at promoting the settlement of highly skilled foreigners, will be implemented from April 1. Aside from the creation of a new “Highly Skilled Professional” status, if approved, a permanent resident visa may be obtained after 3 years instead of 10 years, allowing relaxed limitations to activities.

The following 3 points are the main revision points.

1. “Investor/Business Manager” Residential Status → “Business Manager”
   Foreigners can now engage in business management and operation in companies in Japan, not just foreign investment companies.

2. “Engineer” and “Specialist in Humanities/International Services” statuses → “Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services”
   The statuses “Engineer” and “Specialist in Humanities/International Services” have been consolidated.

3. The “Student” status has been expanded (implemented from Jan. 1, 2015)
   Elementary and Junior high school international students will be given the “Student” status.

Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

(Mon-Fri, not open on weekends and national holidays)
(Hours 9:00-17:30)
Tel (direct line) 06-6941-2297
Languages: English, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Thai, Filipino, Vietnamese, Japanese

Staff Introduction

Hello

My name is Hitomi Tsunemi. I have started working as an Advice Officer (Part-time) at the Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents since October last year. Up till now, I had been a freelance interpreter, translator, interpreter guide, and English teacher. I was also involved with OFIX as a registered interpreter/translator before. I lived in the US for 1 year as an exchange student, and live a few years again after I got married. Living overseas, I have had my share of helplessness and troubles with foreign customs, food, and human relationships.

I realized that timely information and the sincerity of the people around me who helped me out at that time were things to be thankful about. Now that I am in Japan, I hope that I could pay it forward to foreigners in what little way I can. This is my first time to be a counselor and there are many things to study everyday as there are different fields, such as systems, law, medicine, education, etc. I would like to do my best to quickly provide proper information to foreigners in trouble.
Briefing Session of JICA Volunteers Returning to Japan

A Briefing Session of JICA Volunteers Returning to Japan was held at JICA Kansai on January 31 (Saturday). 33 volunteers from 6 prefectures in Kansai who have returned to Japan since January reported on their activities overseas.

【What is the Briefing Session?】
The briefing has been held since last year because volunteers wanted to share with everyone what international cooperation is, what one person can do and about what they have realized overseas. This year, the 33 volunteers were distributed to 5 rooms and each one gave a 15 minute presentation on what they did overseas. About 300 people came, including families of present volunteers who are abroad.

【JOCV’s 50th Year】
The Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV), one of JICA’s volunteer programs, sent its first volunteer to Laos 50 years ago in 1965. Since then, about 40,000 had been sent to 88 countries in the world and had worked with people in those countries. To celebrate its 50th year, participants were asked to write a message for the volunteers overseas. There were many heartwarming messages, like “I also want to be a volunteer”, and “safely come home” from a family member, and from a friend, “Do what you can do now!”

【Volunteers from Osaka】
This year, there were 9 people from Osaka who gave a presentation. One of them is Naohisa Yamashita (Toyono District). After working 4 years at a company, he was dispatched to Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia as a Village Development Promoter. He engaged in activities to increase the income of the residents in his area. Using the area’s specialty (apricots and apples), he helped create new products and improve existing ones for sale to tourists. He worked hard telling everyone to be creative and to listen to the ideas of their co-workers as they worked. He always assumed how people with different culture and customs would think so that he would be able to prepare to respond to them. Mr. Yamashita thought that he was doing the same thing when he was working in Japan. Wherever you work, the basic things are probably the same.

Volunteers who gave presentations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Work Field</th>
<th>Hometown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Takahiro Hamakawa</td>
<td>Micronesia</td>
<td>Environment Education</td>
<td>Osaka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiori Eto</td>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Takatsuki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yui Okuda</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>Village Development Promoter</td>
<td>Tondabayashi</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aiko Hanamoto</td>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>PC Instructor</td>
<td>Hirakata</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kentaro Taniguchi</td>
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<td>Saita</td>
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<tr>
<td>Haruka Sugiyama</td>
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<td>Nago Nagano</td>
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<td>Ryosuke Fukuda</td>
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<td>Atsuko Ishikawa</td>
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<td>Youth Activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naohisa Yamashita</td>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>Village Development Promoter</td>
<td>Toyono Dist.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

【Reception】
The reception after the briefing was a chance to directly talk with the volunteers. Elementary students, with a notebook in one hand, enthusiastically interviewed the volunteers. Please come again to the briefing next year. We’ll be waiting.

Volunteers who gave presentations

Mr. Yamashita making jam with the local workers.

Ms. Ishikawa responding to an interview by elementary students.

Editorial Note

Recently, I have been very busy with my work, such as the International Understanding Education Program, as it is the final period to reach our set goals. Editing the bimonthly OFIX is always a race with the deadline. Especially during the end of the fiscal year when there are many events... (Tan)