

New Year's Reflections

Striving for a Volunteer Society

Happy New Year. I hope you all welcomed the New Year in good health.

I would like to thank everyone for all your ongoing support and assistance for OFIX's programs and for promoting Osaka's Internationalization.

In today's information revolution, the surging wave of globalization, having surpassed the industrial revolution of the past, has forced us to rethink the structure of our economy, society and culture. We have entered an age where the values we hold are being reevaluated on a daily basis.

I started viewing TED Talks on the recommendation of an English school teacher, and it has given me a real sense of the sheer size of the world. I have been fascinated by the kind of fresh ideas and persuasive reasoning I could never imagine occurring in the Japanese education environment.

Here at OFIX, we have started our three-year medium-term management plan (2015-2017) and with your support, in its first year we have successfully reached the target goals in our three major programs : ① the expansion of Elementary and Junior High school visits within the International Understanding Education Program, ② establishing One-day Consultations for Foreign Residents in local municipalities and ③ expanding our Disaster Emergency Volunteer Program.

OFIX Administrative Director Yoshihide Domoto

In addition, as part of Osaka Prefecture's earthquake and tsunami disaster contingency planning, on January 19th we will co-host a Multilingual Support Center in Times of Disasters drill with the Osaka Prefectural Government's International Affairs Division.

I hope that this hard work will help contribute to the creation of a more volunteer-oriented society.

Until now we have actively promoted international exchange through each of our programs, however we must now further develop them with an even broader mindset. As a public foundation, OFIX is striving to promote services that are reflective of the global age and to provide innovative organizational management with the key goal of creating a more flexible and broader volunteer society. Your support and understanding would be greatly appreciated.

Since last year, we have been actively using Facebook to provide timely information regarding upcoming and completed activities. From this year, OFIX News will be issued quarterly (April, July, October and January) and we will continue to make it a valuable source of information.

Now, continuing from last year, please allow me to use this New Year's message in place of the Japanese New Year's greeting card to wish all our supporting members and OFIX volunteers a safe and happy new year.

Activity Report

Discussing the Osaka Multilingual Support Center in Times of Disasters Through staff training

OFIX Advertising Chief Kayo Abe

At OFIX we have agreed to establish the Osaka Multilingual Support Center in Times of Disasters in conjunction with the Osaka Prefectural Government in the case of a large-scale disaster. In order to ensure the smooth operation of the Center, we held a staff training session on November 30th 2015 called "Discussing the Osaka Multilingual Support Center in Times of Disasters".

The training was a two-part program. In the first half of the training, the Director of the National Managerial Council for Multicultural Information and Assistance, Yoshihiko Doi, gave us a lecture on the duties of a multilingual disaster support center. First he explained the functions and duties of the center and then proceeded to give detailed insight on the makeup and specific activities of the organization, drawing on his experiences as Chief of the Multilingual Support Center for the Tohoku Earthquake and cases in other prefectures and international

In the case of a large-scale disaster, we learned the importance of fulfilling a center's mission to bridge the "Information Gap" between Japanese people and those lacking Japanese language ability.

In the second half of the workshop, we divided up into the different groups of our Multilingual Support Center - the Center chief group, the multilingual support group, the consultation group and the coordination group. In these groups each member wrote down the parts of their roles they were confident about and those they weren't, and talked about ways to overcome any current challenges.

Participating staff members agreed to work hard to fully understand their duties, clarify any ongoing issues, and reflect on Mr. Doi's lecture to make the Center a success in the future.

Each group agreed to exchange ideas and clear up any issues before the next training with the hope that it leads to a more smoothly-run Center.



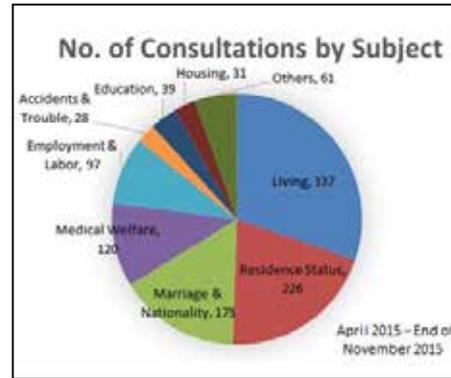
■ Consultation Update for FY2015 (April 2015 - End of November 2015)

At OFIX we have been providing the Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents (OIS) since receiving the consignment from Osaka Prefecture in 2009. This service is provided in eight languages: English, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Thai, Filipino and Vietnamese. For other than English and Japanese, we use a three-way telephone to connect the foreign resident, Information Service personnel and registered counselor waiting at home.

From April to the end of November 2015, we saw a 32% percent increase (246 cases) in consultations compared to last year. April and October were significantly higher than average, with an increase of 23% in each month. This is likely due to those months often involving changes in residence and employment. Interpreting requests were common among foreign residents dealing with application procedures at local governments such as residence changes, national health insurance and pension.

In recent years, requests for Vietnamese and Spanish languages have increased due to the rise in Vietnamese and Peruvian residents. For Vietnamese consultations, enquiries about technical intern training programs and international marriages were common. Vietnamese consultations between April and November 2015 reached 92 cases, compared to 68 consultations in the whole FY2014, making it the second most requested language after English (fourth in FY2014). Filipino consultations have risen from FY2014 with many people having consultations on a regular basis. In contrast, Chinese consultations did not increase, likely due to municipalities that now have Chinese consultation and interpreting staff.

Looking at the content of consultations individually, the most common issues for foreign residents in Osaka were related to "Living", accounting for 30% of cases. We have also been responding to complex situations



such as the division of property after an international divorce and emotional support for marital problems. Consultations regarding children have varied from issues including adoption procedures, children leaving their home countries to enter Japanese schools and

the learning-assistance programs available to them.

Next was "Residence Status" (20%) followed by "Marriage & Nationality" (16%), with many cases involving the validity of one's residence status after divorce or loss of employment.

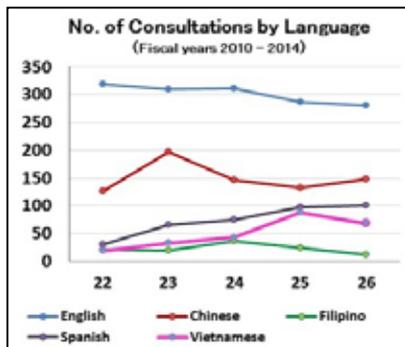
With the introduction of the My Number System this fiscal year, we have seen a glimpse of the uneasiness people feel towards it, with many foreigners unsure whether or when they will receive My Number cards. Our OIS staff are working hard to collect information in order to respond appropriately to all types of enquiries.

■ Local Consultation Assistance for Foreign Residents Co-hosting One-day Consultations for Foreigners with Local Municipalities in Osaka Prefecture.

While the OIS is designed to reach foreign residents all over Osaka Prefecture, ideally local governments should also be able to provide assistance. The OIS has been conducting One-day Consultations for Foreign Residents in conjunction with municipalities within Osaka Prefecture, holding six of these in FY2015.

Additionally, we have the Osaka Prefectural Network Meeting for Counselors at Help Desks Providing Administrative Information to Foreigners. These meetings are for information help desk staff assisting foreign residents in municipal governments. We also hold regular training workshops to improve the skills of counselors and interpreters.

We will continue to provide support for foreign residents as we stride towards local governments establishing their own information help desks in the future.



Reports by Registered Counselors

Spanish counselor
Mari Hontsu



With the spread of the Internet in recent years, people living in other prefectures or even overseas can access the OIS. There are many Japanese descendants from South America who face significant problems, as they are unable to find information due to the language barrier.

Since the Revision of the Immigration Control Act 25 years ago that allowed South-American Japanese descendants to work in Japan, their status has changed from "migrant workers" to "long-term residents", but many still lack Japanese communication skills. I believe my mission is to provide language assistance and help them build connections within local communities, as many face difficulties since they don't have pension, insurance or a sense of belonging in Japan.

Vietnamese counselor
Yuuki Kawame



In recent years, many Vietnamese people have come to Japan as international students or technical trainees.

While they are excited about living in Japan, they also face various troubles as the language barrier makes it difficult to adjust to Japanese culture and customs, creating feelings of isolation. Being a Vietnamese-speaking counselor, I hope I can assist Vietnamese residents in Japan by utilizing the skills and experiences I've gained over time so that they can live rich, trouble-free lives.

Chinese counselor
Ma Yingyun



As a Chinese-speaking OFIX counselor, I help my fellow Chinese compatriots deal with issues in Japan including marital problems among international couples, status of residence, traffic accidents and other various problems in their daily lives. I also help with language difficulties and assist by giving information about hospitals with Chinese-speaking doctors.

Additionally, I have interpreted over the phone when requested by medical institutions and have also helped those holidaying in Osaka. It is my pleasure to help Chinese people live happy, comfortable lives in Japan.

Sakai International Hall - Greetings from Orion International House

◎ Orion International House Evacuation Drill

Date and Time: Saturday November 21st 10:00am-11:30am

Participants: 30 Orion Dormitory students and others

International students from Orion International House and nearby Osaka City University International Residence conduct an evacuation drill together every year. This year a fire department official showed students how to use a fire extinguisher in the case of a fire breaking out inside their dormitory. Feedback from students included "I learnt how to extinguish a fire properly, safely evacuate and how to call and notify emergency services on 119."

After the fire-prevention demonstration, participants walked to Nishimozu Elementary School, the designated emergency evacuation area in case of a disaster, so that they could become familiar with the route. They also learned to leave a memo about their evacuation site in their homes before evacuating in the case of a disaster.



◎ Orion International House Local Exchange Event (Winter Party)

Date and Time: Sunday December 6th 5:00pm-7:00pm

Participants: 69 people

A local exchange event was held for dormitory students and local residents to help them develop friendships in the community.

Students received a customary crime-prevention lesson from Kita Sakai Police Station, a vocal performance from Kenroukai Community Group, calligraphy lessons, and were also dressed up in kimonos with assistance from Yoshida Kimono Shop. Lots of people could be heard saying "so beautiful!" looking at the students wearing kimonos. This year was the first time a big Karuta competition was held, allowing students to enjoy an early taste of New Year festivities.



◎ Orion International Resident Assistant Introduction

Yoshito Takagi

I retired from Panasonic in 2011 and began working as the resident assistant of Orion International House in April 2014.



In the ten years before my retirement, I was posted at The Konosuke Matsushita Memorial Foundation in charge of allocating scholarship grants to international students at the International University of Japan in Minamiuonuma City, Niigata Prefecture, so talking to Orion residents feels very familiar to me. As a reader of OFIX News it also feels natural to be working here.

Since I was in Junior High School, I learned English by singing songs and now I am a member of an English rakugo group that performs non-professional rakugo shows. I also visit universities with my fellow rakugo friends and hold performances for students.

In my current job as resident assistant, I am also involved in translating important information into English for Orion students and I do my best to converse in English with them.

Through both my work and hobbies, I have made it my last goal in life to convey to foreign residents and Orion students the Japanese people's generous way of thinking.

■ The 18th Friendship Exchange Festival

Date: Monday November 23rd

Place: The Japan Foundation Japanese-Language Institute, Kansai



This annual event is held by The Council for Participants of Japanese-Language Institute, Kansai (made up of OFIX and the 10 International

Exchange organizations in and south of Kishiwada city) to improve friendly relations between students of the institute and local residents. This year, the 18th festival began with a performance by The Hannan Brass Band and a fashion show with students from the institute modelling native attire from their home countries. As is customary, students set up booths to introduce their countries and each International Exchange organization had an area where they introduced Japanese culture such as tea ceremony, kimono dress-up and Iaido martial arts. The Nanking Tamasudare (bamboo woven screen) and plate spinning activities were particularly popular among the local children.

This year's event was again successful in strengthening the ties between students and the local Japanese community.

■ The 2nd Osaka Prefectural Network Meeting for Counselors at Help Desks Providing Administrative Information to Foreigners

Date and Time: Tuesday December 8th 1:30pm-4:30pm

Place: My Dome Osaka, 8th Floor, 3rd Meeting Room

Attendees: 28 people

Mr. Tomohisa Takayama, the Coordination Officer at the Osaka Regional Immigration Bureau, gave a lecture about the amendments made to the Immigration Control Act in July 2012 and more recent revisions. He discussed the residency management system for mid to long-term foreign residents, the residence card and other important issues.

In the second-half of the meeting, Ms. Shizuyo Yoshitomi, Specially Appointed Associate Professor at Global Collaboration Center, Osaka University and Director of NPO Multilanguage Center FACIL, facilitated a workshop. Here, examples of consultations were introduced and groups discussed the context, issues involved, and possible solutions for each case.

Participants exchanged opinions and heard solutions to consultation issues, widening their perspectives.



<OFIX Co-hosting Activity Report>

■ Free One-day Consultation for Foreigners/International Friendship Association of Kishiwada

Date: Sunday December 13th

Place: Madoka Hall 2nd Floor

For the first time, the International Friendship Association of Kishiwada hosted a Free One-Day Consultation for Foreigners together with OFIX. We had 10 consultations, including visits by foreign residents who also study Japanese at the Association.

Certified administrative procedures legal specialists and OFIX consultants were on hand and volunteer interpreters of English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Indonesian and Chinese language helped facilitate the conversation.

Counselors were pleased with the convenience of having the information service so close to their homes, and hoped more events would be held locally in the future.

Topics

OFIX to participate in the Osaka Prefectural Government's earthquake and tsunami disaster drill for this fiscal year!

OFIX and the Osaka Prefectural Government will conduct an emergency drill to help establish the operations of the Osaka Multilingual Support Center in Times of Disasters. The Center will become the main place for the provision of information in the occurrence of a large-scale disaster.

The emergency drill on Tuesday January 19th 2016 is one part of the earthquake and tsunami disaster response to the potential Nankai Earthquake. The aim of the drill is to strengthen the ties between the organizations concerned and to improve our capabilities to cope with a disaster emergency.

The first section will be about the fundamentals of "Easy Japanese" and to understand the advantages and disadvantages of providing information. In the second section, we will simulate the Center in the midst of a natural disaster, so we can experience the process involved in providing multilingual information such as organizing and



sorting of information, its translation, and the tools required. Through this training, we will reaffirm how we will provide multilingual information and the overall structure of the Center.

Ikeda Multicultural Center has opened!



On November 1st 2015, the Ikeda Multicultural Center (IMC) opened its doors to provide assistance to foreign residents to serve as a hub of multiculturalism in Ikeda city.

On the day we visited the Center there was a meeting for volunteers, which created a very lively atmosphere.

Every Thursday between 2:00pm and 4:00pm, there is a free information service for foreign residents. Consultations are available in English, Chinese and Korean. (Please contact IMC beforehand if you would like to request an interpreter of a different language)

The everyday activities of IMC can be viewed on their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/ikedamulticulturalcenter>

Address: 3-1-40 Jonan, Ikeda-shi

(Ikeda General Health and Welfare Center)

Tel: 072-735-7588 Fax: 072-735-7589

Opening Hours: 10:00am-6:00pm

Closed: Tuesdays second Saturday of every month, December 29th - January 3rd.

E-mail: imc@city.ikeda.osaka.jp

Notice

◎ The 2016 One World Festival

The One World Festival, aimed to foster international cooperation and bring the world together will be held as follows:

Date and Time: Saturday February 6th and Sunday February 7th 2016 10:00am-5:00pm

Place: Kansai Television Ogimachi Square, Kita-ku-min Center and Ogimachi Park

<http://www.interpeople.or.jp/owf/>

◎ Sakai International Hall - Orion International House: Tenants wanted from April 2016

From early January, we are looking for tenants who will reside in Orion International House starting April this year.

Further details will be published in the early January on the OFIX homepage.

● Next issue of OFIX News (Issue 78) will be in April.

【Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents】 (within OFIX) Free Consultation Desk for Foreigners

(Consultations about Residential status, Labor, Medical treatment, Social welfare, Daily living, etc.)

Day and Time: 9:00 am-5:00 pm (Monday-Friday)

Break (12:15 pm-1:00 pm)

Telephone: 06-6941-2297

Language: English, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish
Thai, Filipino, Vietnamese

E-mail: jouhou-c@ofix.or.jp

Editor's Note:

Recently, I participated in the 2nd Osaka Prefectural Network Meeting for Counselors at Help Desks Providing Administrative Information to Foreigners as an OIS staff member. By exchanging opinions with consultants from other organizations and finding out solutions through consultation simulations, it reaffirmed to me the importance of a multilateral network. I am dedicated at providing a flexible information service and hope I can assist in making Osaka a safer, more comfortable place for foreigners to live.

◎ Comments and suggestions for OFIX News (info@ofix.or.jp)

◎ OFIX News Back Numbers

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/mail/backnumber.html>

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