

Representing the scholars, Le Ngoc Chanh Tin from Vietnam and Sim Suyong from Korea, who are also participating in the OFIX International Understanding Education Program as Supporters, each made a report of their activities.

So many positive and eager questions from each Consul General were asked that almost all of the time was used up.

After that, there was a reception where you could see everyone in a friendly mood and Consuls encouraging scholars from their own country. The reception closed with the scholars and everyone else satisfied.

■ International Association Network Osaka Study Series -Considering Foreigner Support During a Disaster-

The "International Exchange Association Network Osaka" is a network to support foreign residents in Osaka through information exchange between international exchange associations within Osaka Prefecture. Tondabayashi City, Suita City and Minoh City are taking the lead, and Osaka International House Foundation and OFIX are also participating in the activities.

Specifically, activities, such as both engaging in Chinese Language translation during the Great East Japan Earthquake, are being developed.

Since a single international exchange association cannot respond fully when a great Nankai Trough earthquake strikes Osaka, it is necessary for international exchange associations to collaborate and work together. To achieve that, a model project for the wide-area collaboration of international exchange associations in Osaka Prefecture for the support of foreigners during a disaster entitled, "International Association Network Osaka Study Series -Considering Foreigner Support During a Disaster-", was conducted.

3 preliminary trainings were also conducted to prepare for the exercises. Pioneer of "Simple Japanese" Prof. Kazuyuki Sato of Hirosaki University, Allied Neighborhood Association Chairman Mr. Hitoshi Imano, who was involved in managing an evacuation center in Sendai City, and Sendai International Relations Association Chairman Ms. Nobuko Sudo, who was involved in the support of foreigners at the Multilingual Center, were invited as speakers on August 23, 30 and September 20 respectively to talk about their actual experiences. Afterwards, a workshop on translating disaster information from difficult Japanese to simple Japanese, examined the needs in accordance with the attributes of 3 foreign families that have evacuated to the evacuation center, and choosing from a voluminous amount of information that which would be immediately needed by the foreigner was conducted. There were about 40 participants in each session.

Through these preliminary trainings, the Minoh Association for Global Awareness in Northern Osaka and the Tondabayashi Intercultural Communication Center in Southern Osaka conducted their self-made exercises that featured both "Experiencing an Evacuation Center for Foreigners" and "Multilingual Support Center Installation Training". Minoh Association for Global Awareness conducted their exercises on November 1, while Tondabayashi Intercultural Communication Center conducted theirs on November 23. About 80 people participated in both the Northern and Southern exercises.

The "Experiencing an Evacuation Center for Foreigners" training was implemented with the full cooperation of the Risk Management Department, the fire station, etc. of the local municipality. Foreigners who participated commented: "I now know what to do when there is a disaster" and "I could understand by seeing and doing it myself".

At the Multilingual Support Center Installation Training, the participants made use of the skills acquired from the preliminary trainings, they visited the evacuation centers, posted disaster prevention information, requested

the Sendai International Relations Association and Shimane International Center for translations, and putting up disaster prevention information on the homepage, etc. It was a training where the participants of the preliminary trainings thought and acted for themselves. Though there were times they were not sure of what to do, they tackled the work energetically.

At the exercise report and review on January 24, we heard comments like, "it was good to have the participation of a wide range of institutions and organizations, from the municipality, social welfare council, Web broadcasting, administration, international exchange associations to the Fire Department, Police Department" and "I realized the need to continuously implement this". Mr. Toki, Coordinator and the Director of the NPO National Council for Multicultural Corporate Manager, also mentioned "the evacuation center training was easy to understand since it was an interactive training and it was good that the training was jointly implemented by people from a wide variety of fields," and with regards to the Support Center Installation Training he gave the following advice: "there was some confusion due to lack of communication, but continuation of the program and not perfection is required."

The Network is still writing the report. We will be printing out the materials, so please utilize it when you implement disaster prevention trainings in the future.

■Overseas Study Forum

To increase the motivation and consciousness of youth who tend to be afraid of going outside Japan, the "Overseas Study Forum: What We Gain from Overseas Study" was held on February 11 at My Dome Osaka. We invited graduates of the Osaka Global School, which is being conducted by the Osaka Prefectural Internationalization Strategy Executive Committee, Japanese youth with experience studying overseas, and international students studying in Osaka, who gave a presentation about their experiences overseas. Afterwards, there was a discussion about what could be gained by studying overseas.

There were about 50 people, youths and parents, who attended and were very much absorbed listening to the presentations of the guests. They also aggressively asked questions after the presentation. After the presentation, the participants answered a questionnaire and gave comments such as, "It was good that I could listen to the experiences of someone who actually studied overseas. I was able to learn about the good points of studying overseas"; "It was good that I could listen to not just the experiences of not just one, but many people. After hearing one presenter that both her parents were born and raised in Japan, I lost my doubts on whether I could study overseas or not"; "I, myself, don't have much knowledge about studying overseas. I now feel at ease after participating in this Forum and listening to the different presentations." It was a Forum that helped increase the interest of the participants in overseas study.

■Overseas Study Forum

On December 9 (Monday) last year, the Overseas Emigrants Family Association Kinki Block Meeting was held at My Dome Osaka.

The Kinki Block Meeting is held once a year and presently Kyoto Prefecture, Hyogo Prefecture and Osaka Prefecture take turns in hosting it. The meeting is a venue for exchange for Overseas Emigrants Family Associations from the Kinki area, giving reports of their activities and exchanging ideas. Recently, because of decreasing members of the Overseas Emigrants Family Association due to aging, the scale of its activities is getting smaller. Out of all the regional blocks that have existed nationwide, only 2 blocks, the Kanto-Koshin

Etsu-Shizuoka block and the Kinki block are the only ones holding block meetings.

Hence, in addition to the guests from the Association of Nikkei & Japanese Abroad and JICA Kansai, members of the Overseas Emigrants Family Associations from Western Japan, Toyama Prefecture, Ishikawa Prefecture and Shimane Prefecture, also attended as observers. It was the first time for the Kinki Block Meeting to have such observers and a total of 30 people attended the meeting. Activity reports and an exchange of opinion were held. It was a valuable meeting as it provided a venue to discuss the future of the Overseas Emigrants Family Association and its activity policies.

■ One World Festival

On February 2 (Saturday) and 2 (Sunday), the 21st One World Festival was held at the Osaka International House Foundation on the theme of "Feel, Touch, Help...An International Exchange Festival Bridging the World". In the 2 days of the Festival there was a total of 17,500 visitors, 199 volunteers, 141 organizations consisting of 115 NPO/NGOs, 8 educational institutions, 3 international associations, 5 government organizations, 1 consulate and 9 companies, that opened booths introducing their activities. There were 41 organizations that only conducted programs and these included 10 organizations that had seminars and workshops in the meeting rooms, 14 organizations that performed ethnic dances and 17 organizations that conducted other experience programs.

OFIX also participated from the planning stage as a member of the Executive Committee and put out notices with ethnic media. FM COCOLO also cooperated by publicizing the Festival for free.

[02] Introduction of New Staff

■ Hello!

Hello. My name is Ikuko Takabatake and I'm the new Counselor for the Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents.

Before entering OFIX, I had been involved as an English Community Interpreter for the activities of OFIX and other organizations. Before that, I had been living in the Eastern part of the US for 13 years because of family work.

I had many problems with living overseas, especially with raising children, education, and medical related problems. The internet was not yet that popular at that time and gathering information was very difficult. There were times that because of so many differences, from language to culture, I didn't know where to begin and I just gave up. I had also experienced being treated harshly because we couldn't understand each other well enough in English. However, I realized that I would not be able to get any information if I were passive. I had to aggressively take action and express what I want. Having that experience, I would like to be of some help to the foreigners who are living in Japan. Making use of what I've learned as an interpreter volunteer, I would like to do my best in providing proper information as a counselor. The content of consultations that we get cover many areas and there are still many things that I have to learn, so please bear with me.

[03] Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

■ Expansion of the Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents

The Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents is aiming to enhance its consultation services.

1) Conducting a Free 1-Day Consultation with Ikeda City

As a collaborative project with municipalities, OFIX , together with Ikeda City, has held a "Free Consultation for Foreigners" on January 16 and another on March 9.

The consultation on March 9 (Sunday) is scheduled to be held at the Ikeda City Culture Plaza. It is free and there is no need for an appointment. Foreigners from other municipalities may also participate. For details, please see the OFIX homepage.

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/news.html#20131218>

2) Cooperation with Seminar and Consultation Services for Filipinos

Participated and supported the Seminar for Philippine Residents (February 23) and Free Consultation (March 2) . The free consultation is not only for personal appearances. Consultation by telephone is also accepted. For details, please see the OFIX homepage.

<http://www.ofix.or.jp/news.html#20140127>

3) Increase of Counselor staff

To be able to quickly respond to the people who wish to have counseling, the number of counselors has been increased to 2 people from December last year.

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(Mon-Fri, not open on weekends and national holidays)

(Hours 9:00-17:30)

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[04] OFIX Coordinator for International Relations Report

■ Philippine Paradise

Hello everyone! This is your International Relations Coordinator, Alvin. How are you all doing? Cold weather still continues and I really hope it becomes warmer soon. Well, recently, people ask me about tourist spots in the Philippines. When you mention Philippines, the image that many people have is the sea since it is a country in the south. However, the sea is not the only good thing about the Philippines. I will now introduce to you a few of the tourist spots in the Philippines.

If you are going to the sea:

1)Boracay: Boracay is located in the central part of the Philippines and is 2 hours away from Manila (plane+car). The beautiful sea and the white sandy beaches are worth seeing in Boracay. If you dive, it is also a popular spot for diving.

2)Palawan: Palawan is the westernmost island in the Philippines. Recently, it has been receiving much attention. There are many island resorts and for divers who want to see shipwrecks, the Busuanga island in Palawan is recommended. It takes about an hour by plane from Manila.

3)Bohol: Bohol is a beautiful tourist spot, but it has been directly hit by the typhoon Haiyan last year. You can do various activities, such as diving, dolphin/whale watching, hiking, etc.

There are other places to go to aside from the sea.

1)Banaue Rice Terraces : This is a rice terraces on the side of the mountain built 2,000 years ago. It is famous and known as a World Heritage of the Philippines. From Manila, it takes about 9 hours by car, but it is worth the 9 hours. If you can leisurely travel, I think it is also good to stop by the different towns along the way to Banaue.

2)Batanes : If you want to escape the city and spend time leisurely in nature, then Batanes is a good place to be. Electric lights are not being used very much, so the stars in the night time sky are marvelous. The number of visitors who can visit Batanes is limited, so there are very few people who visit there. It takes about 1 hour

