



「OFIX News」 Issue 77 (January 1st 2016)

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Exchange



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Editor's note

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【01】 New Year's Reflections

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■ Striving for a Volunteer Society

OPIX Administrative Director Yoshihide Domoto

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 OPIX'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 quickly rethink the structure of our economy, society and culture. We have entered an age where we must now reconsider the values we have held up until now. 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 fresh ideas and persuasive reasoning that could never be imagined in the Japanese education environment.

Here at OPIX, 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.

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 formation 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 so that we can provide timely information regarding completed and upcoming activities. From this year, OFIX News will be issued quarterly (April, July, October and January) and ongoing efforts are being made 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.

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## ■ 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 exchange associations.

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.

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### 【03】 Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents (OIS)

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#### ■ 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. Of those languages other than English and Japanese, we use a three-way telephone

system (Trio-phone) so that three people - the foreign resident, Information Service personnel and the registered counselor waiting at home can be connected.

From April to the end of November 2015, we saw a 32% percent increase (246 cases) in the number of consultations compared to the same period last year. April and October were considerably higher than average, with an increase of 23% in each month. This can be attributed to those months often involving lifestyle changes such as changes in residence and employment. Interpreting requests were also very common among foreign residents dealing with application procedures at local municipal 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 nationals living in Osaka. In the case of Vietnamese language, consultations concerning 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. It is now the second most requested language after English (having been fourth in FY2014). For the Filipino language, requests have risen from FY2014 and many people having consultations on a regular basis. On the other hand, Chinese language consultations did not increase, likely due to local municipalities starting to have their own Chinese consultation and interpreting staff.



Looking at the content of consultations individually, the most common problems for foreign residents in Osaka were related to "Living", accounting for 30% of the cases received. We have also been responding to complex situations such as the division of property after an international divorce and emotional support for marital problems. Regarding consultations about children, cases 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 related to the validity of one's status of residence after divorce or loss of employment.

With the introduction of the My Number System this fiscal year, we have already seen a glimpse of the uneasiness people have towards this new system, with foreign residents unsure whether and when they will receive My Number cards. Our OIS staff are working daily to gather information so that they can respond diligently to all different types of questions people may have.

## ■ Local Consultation Assistance for Foreign Residents

Co-hosting One-day Consultations for Foreigners  
with Local Municipalities in Osaka Prefecture

The OIS is designed to reach people all over Osaka Prefecture, however ideally they should be able to seek help in their local

municipality. To achieve this, we have been conducting One-day Consultations for Foreign Residents in conjunction with local municipalities within Osaka Prefecture. We had held six of these in FY2015.

Additionally, we hold the Osaka Prefectural Network Meeting for Counselors at Help Desks Providing Administrative Information to Foreigners. These meetings are for those in charge of information help desks for foreign residents in municipal governments and help strengthen the connections between counselors themselves. 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 having all local governments establish their own information help desks in the near 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 find OIS for consultation. There are many Japanese descendants from South America who face significant problems because 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 continue to grow older without proper Japanese communication skills even now. I believe my mission is to provide language assistance and support these people who are in a difficult situation because they don't have pension, insurance or a sense of belonging in their home countries, by cooperating with their local community.

● Vietnamese counselor                      Yuuki Kawame

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

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## 【04】 Activity Report

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### ■ 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, all 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.

## ◎ 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 like fate 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 as much as possible.

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 event is held every year 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 residents in the community. This year, the 18th festival kicked off with a performance by The Hannan Brass Band and continuing from last year, 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 introducing Japanese culture such as tea ceremony, kimono dress-up and laido martial arts. The Nanking Tamasudare (bamboo woven screen) and plate spinning activities were particularly popular among the local children.

This year's event was also a success in strengthening the ties between students and the local 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

We were given the pleasure of having Mr. Tomohisa Takayama, the Coordination Officer at the Osaka Regional Immigration Bureau, give a lecture based on the amendments made to the Immigration Control Act in July 2012 and more recent revisions. He also talked about the residency management system for mid to long-term foreign residents, the residence card and other pressing issues.

In the second-half of the meeting we asked Ms. Shizuyo Yoshitomi, Specially Appointed Associate Professor at Global Collaboration Center, Osaka University and Director of NPO Multilanguage Center FACIL, to facilitate a workshop. In this workshop, example cases were introduced and each group discussed the context, issues involved, and possible solutions for each consultation.

Members of differing organizations were able to exchange opinions and hear about 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 event would be held locally in the future.

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## 【05】 Topics

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

OFIX and the Osaka Prefectural Government will conduct an emergency drill that will help establish and form 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 drill planning in 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 a basic course about the fundamentals of "Easy Japanese" and understanding the advantages and disadvantages of providing information. The second section is practical training where we will simulate the Center in the midst of a natural disaster. By doing this we can experience the steps required in providing multilingual information such as organizing and sorting of information, its translation, and the tools required in disseminating important information.

Through this training, we will reaffirm how we will provide multiple language information and the makeup of this system.

■ 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](mailto:imc@city.ikeda.osaka.jp)

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**【06】** Announcements

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© 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.

#### 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.

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**【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: 9:00am-5:30pm (Monday to Friday)

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

Telephone: 06-6941-2297

Languages: English, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, Spanish, Thai, Filipino and Vietnamese.

E-mail [jouhou-c@ofix.or.jp](mailto:jouhou-c@ofix.or.jp)

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★Osaka Prefecture E-Magazine Information★ "G E O (Global E-net Osaka)"

Introducing Osaka's best spots events and other important facts!

⇒ <http://www.pref.osaka.jp/kokusai/geo/index.html>

★Other announcements★

※International Understanding Education Program dispatching foreign volunteers to Elementary, Junior High and High schools.

⇒ <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/training/education/dispatch.html>

※Introducing OFIX's volunteer system

⇒ <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/accept/volunteer/system.html>

※OFIX supporting members and donations wanted

⇒ <http://www.ofix.or.jp/english/ofix/support/index.html>

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