

F O C U S

~Conversation with Consultation Staff~

We had a conversation with the consultation staff of the Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents. Please take a look! →P.3



Official Character
Bora-chan

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Activity Report

FY2024

Collaborative Program with the National Council of Social Welfare

This year, OFIX is implementing a support program for foreign residents with the National Council of Social Welfare. In addition to food banks being provided at consultations for foreign residents, OFIX plans to hold lectures and training seminars for related organizations and their members on how to support foreign residents.

1st Training Seminar

6/18 (Tue)

The National Council of Social Welfare contributes to the well-being of local regions through various welfare services and volunteer activities. In collaboration with the council, we held a training seminar for council staff, staff in charge of internationalization, and consultation staff from international exchange associations. During the training, Shizuyo Yoshitomi, Professor of the School of Psychology and Social Welfare/International Center Director for Mukogawa Women's University, lectured about "Moving Towards a Society Where No One is Left Behind ~The Importance of Multicultural Social Work~".



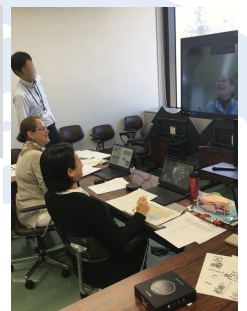
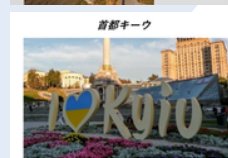
Cross-cultural Awareness Education (CAEE)

At OFIX, we register foreign residents and international students as "supporters" who then visit schools in Osaka Prefecture to take part in Cross-cultural Awareness Education classes. Through the supporters introducing their countries' culture and history, they can interact with the students and aim to deepen multicultural understanding as well as promote multicultural coexistence.

Online Global Meeting

【Elementary School】 5/14 (Tue), 6/4 (Tue), 6/25 (Tue), 7/9 (Tue)
【Junior High School】 5/10 (Fri), 5/31 (Fri), 6/21 (Fri), 7/5 (Fri)

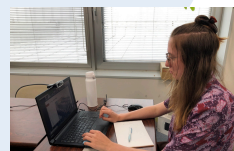
Online Global Meeting (OGM) is a series of four online classes for students in Higashiosaka City organized by the local board of education. During the first round, supporters from China and Ukraine introduced their countries. We received comments from students saying "It was fun to learn about counting in China" and "It was great to learn a lot of different things about Ukraine."



Online International Club OSAKA

5/27 (Mon), 6/25 (Tue)

Online International Club OSAKA is a series of online classes held by the Osaka Prefectural Board of Education. These classes aim to help students with international roots in Osaka Prefecture build their identity. The first class on 5/27 (Mon) had supporters from China, Iran and Korea join, and then the second class on 6/25 (Tue) had supporters from Argentina, Pakistan and Vietnam join.



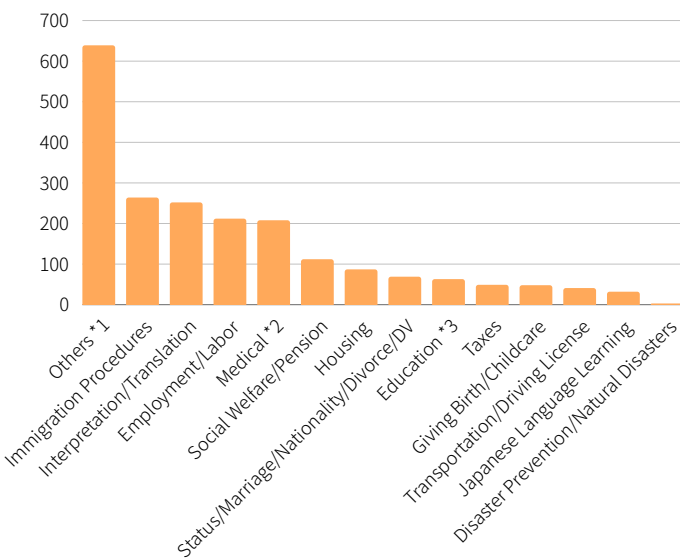


Trends During the 2023 Fiscal Year

In the 2022 fiscal year, “COVID-related consultations” accounted for the majority of the total number of consultations. However, following the reclassification of COVID-19 to “Class 5” in May 2023, the number of COVID-related consultations this year decreases significantly. Furthermore, last year we had many consultations related to refugees from Ukraine, but this year we have had much less. As a result, the total number of consultations went from 2,648 cases last year to 2,079 cases this year, showing a 30% decrease. Despite this, the number of foreigners living in Osaka continues to reach record highs, and we received various different types of consultations, reflecting the increasing number of long-term foreign residents in Osaka.

In the 2023 fiscal year, specialist consultations were improved to provide opportunities for foreign residents to consult directly with specialists such as lawyers, Certified Administrative Procedures Legal Specialist, immigration officials, and Osaka Prefecture Labor Environment Division officials. In addition, consultations with a Certified Clinical Psychologist were offered for the first time in response to the increasingly complex and diverse needs of foreign residents.

No. of Consultations: 2,079 cases



No. of Specialist Consultations and Regional Consultation Opportunities

Specialist Consultations*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event Dates: 54 Clients: 146 Cases: 128
Regional consultations held with prefectural municipalities and International Exchange Organizations*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event Dates: 14 Clients: 197 Cases: 325

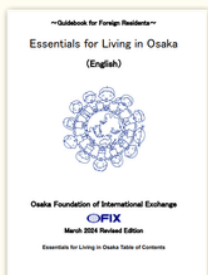
*includes in-person, online, by phone etc., with double counting

*1 includes Ukraine-related inquiries, crime, appointments for specialist consultations
*2 includes COVID-related medical inquiries
*3 includes school/university/international school-related inquiries



Updates of “Essentials for Living in Osaka” and Our Frequently Asked Questions

We have updated the “Guidebook for Foreign Residents: Essentials for Living in Osaka” (in 11 languages and plain Japanese) and our frequently asked questions.



Guidebook
“Essentials for Living in Osaka”
<https://ofix.or.jp/life-english/>



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
<https://ofix.or.jp/life-in-japan-faq-english/>



PLEASE NOTE

The consultation hours for the Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents have partially changed since July 1. Please see the OFIX website for details.

~Conversation with Our Consultation Staff~

We had a conversation with our consultation staff members who provide consultation services for foreign residents daily at the Osaka Information Service for Foreign Residents. The conversation was full of laughter as they shared ideas about the changes in consultations compared to the past, things to keep in mind when conducting consultations, and many other topics.

*Nicknames are being used. Also, please note that the interview was conducted in Japanese, therefore the English may not 100% capture the original content.

Usagi

2 months of consulting experience

Tsunemi

10 years of consulting experience

Nanami

1.5 years of consulting experience

Debbie

2 years of consulting experience

Kaeru

1.5 years of consulting experience



1. Changes in Consultation Topics and Languages

Tsunemi From my experience with consultations so far, I think that things have changed quite a bit. Specialist consultations are something we started recently, and in the past, consultation staff used to handle the majority of consultations from foreign residents. Of course, there were cases in which the consultation staff connected the clients to specialists, but more often than not, the consultation staff did their own research, gathered information, and then passed it on to the clients.

Nanami I feel that there are many consultations and questions that require assistance from specialists now. For example, different from foreigners who have just arrived in Japan, those who have lived in Japan for many years change their status of residence, get married, face divorced, etc. These types of life changes make consultations more difficult.

Tsunemi I think that's also the reason why the number of calls about simple questions have declined lately. I think it is partly because foreigners are able to look things up on their own.

Debbie There are also quite a lot of clients who have at least daily conversation level Japanese. I guess they may be going to Japanese language classes or may be learning from the company where they work.

Tsunemi Looking at the consultation data for the past several years, the ratio of consultations in English and Japanese has increased. In the past, there was a tendency to respond to consultations mainly in multiple languages, but now the ratio of consultations in Japanese and English has increased.

Debbie However, there are some clients who cannot communicate adequately in Japanese or still prefer to speak in their native language. There are also those who understand Japanese but are afraid they cannot express themselves fully in Japanese.

Nanami There are also certainly some cases where clients speak in their native language because they are concerned about whether or not they are being understood properly by Japanese natives.

2. Things to Keep in Mind When Conducting Consultations

Debbie There are many similar consultation cases, but each person needs something different, so even if I start to catch on to what the client is actually worried about, I try to follow their pace and listen to them with fresh ears.

Nanami Sometimes clients can get emotional or angry during a consultation, but I think it is important to be sympathetic towards their feelings because they may have frustration towards something they don't agree with or they may have stress they were holding in. Also, for clients who have difficulty in sorting out problems, we often take time to listen to them and discuss with them together, saying things like "This problem may be the one you feel most trouble with and need to solve first".

Usagi Apart from that, there are also clients who are in difficult situations that can't be resolved immediately, but they still just want to be heard. For example, even though some clients speak Japanese very well, they were not able to tell others about their complicated situations or family circumstances, so they call OFIX instead. I have been told things like "I just wanted to tell someone so I am glad I was able to say it".

Kaeru It is also important to see things from a foreign resident's point of view. Recently in the seminar I went to, I heard about a foreign resident's experience of when he faced a natural disaster the day after he arrived in Japan. He was given onigiri and tea, but he did not know how to eat the onigiri and could not drink the tea because it was too bitter. From my perspective as a Japanese person, I was surprised at how different the perceptions of people who have lived in Japan all their lives are compared to those who come to Japan from overseas. It was a great learning experience for me because it gave me a chance to discover new perspectives.

Nanami Kind of like, "Don't focus only on what you can see, but instead pay attention to what you cannot see".

Debbie That is brilliant! That phrase expresses the very art of consultation. (All laugh)

3. Last but not least...

Q How do you relieve stress?

Tsunemi When I feel stressed, I talk to other consultation staff and after sharing with one another I feel better.

Kaeru I'm very grateful that clients have relied on OFIX and contacted us, even in the midst of difficult circumstances or in the midst of sad or painful situations.

All How heart warming! (Laugh)



FREE Consultations

Check out our event calendar for more details.



<https://ofix.or.jp/calendar/>

7/29 (Mon) Free Information & Advice for Foreign Residents Izumisano City 13:00~16:00

- Place: Shappy House (1-16-5 Onishi, Izumisano City)
- Areas of Consultation: Law, Visa, Welfare, Finances, Child Raising, Daily Life, etc.
- Languages: English, Chinese, Filipino, Sinhala and Portuguese, Japanese
- Method: In-person

We also have food to hand out. (Items are limited)



July and August Specialist Consultations at OFIX

- Place: OFIX (5th Floor, MyDome Osaka, 2-5 Hommachibashi, Chuo-ku, Osaka)
- Date and Time/Consultation Topics:
 - ▷ Immigration—7/24 (Wed) 13:30~17:30, 8/28 (Wed) 13:30~17:30
 - ▷ Legal—7/26 (Fri) 18:00~21:00, 8/25 (Sun) 13:30~16:30
 - ▷ Clinical Psychologist—7/28 (Sun) 13:30~16:30, 8/23 (Fri) 18:00~21:00
 - ▷ Labor—8/5 (Mon) 13:30~17:30, 8/19 (Mon) 13:30~17:30
- Language: 13 languages
- Method: In-person, online, by phone

※Appointment required

Let's get to know Bora-chan!

Bora-chan the official character of OFIX, who is often seen on our pamphlets, website etc., is the character born from the "Volunteer Leader Character Design" competition held in 2012.



Birthday	Jan 25, 1989※	Hobby	Jigsaw Puzzles
Place of Birth	Planet Earth	Special Skills	Making Friends
Personality	Caring	Favorite Place	Osaka

※The date of the establishment of OFIX

We are looking for supporting members!

Annual membership: 50,000 yen for corporate members, 3,000 yen for individual members

<https://www.ofix.or.jp/donate/>

- ◆Provision of OFIX's printed materials, reports and other publications free of charge or on a priority basis
- ◆OFIX News (quarterly) and Report (yearly) containing information on OFIX's activities and international exchange
- ◆FREE banner advertisements (for corporate members)

※Donations to public interest foundations are eligible for tax benefits

Want your banner to shine on our page?

<https://www.ofix.or.jp/banners/> ※To be updated

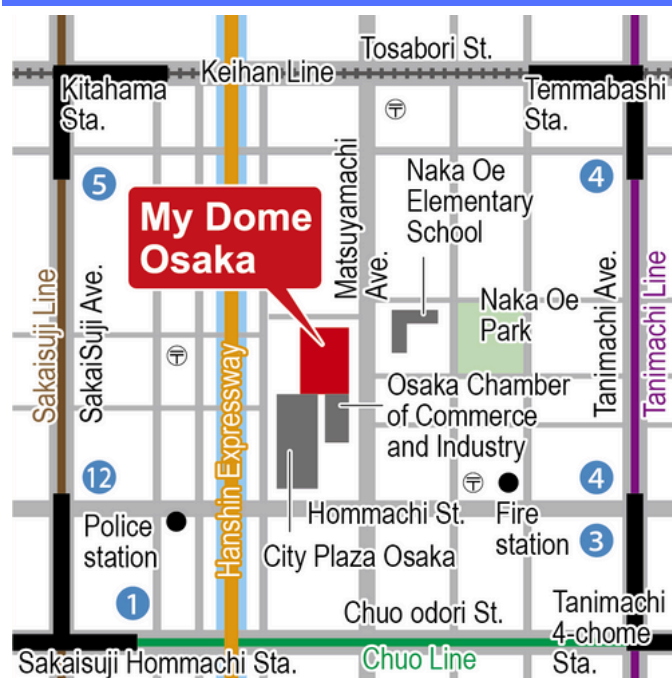
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For comments and suggestions, go to info@ofix.or.jp

Access



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