

# Kyoto City Council on Multicultural Policy

## Newsletter No.4

Edited and published by the International Relations Office. City of Kyoto

The first council meeting of FY2011 was held.

<Time and Date>

9:30 A.M. to Noon, Wed. June 29th, 2011

<Venue>

Kyoto International Community House

<Agenda>

Foreign residents and others of foreign origin who have entered Japan recently.



The participants of the meeting reported on the situation of international students affected by the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and on the problems of international students in Kyoto.

Some members of the Filipino community in Kyoto were invited to talk about the problems of the newly arrived foreign residents.

### **Report 1: Situation of international students before and after the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and their future**

International students in Japan affected by the great earthquake

### **Report 2: The problems of international students in Kyoto (based on the questionnaire)**

Voices of the international students in Kyoto, and what is the better place to live for them

### **-Opinion Exchange with some members of the Pilipino community-**

Activities by the Filipino community in Kyoto and issues of the education of children of the Philippine origin.

## **Report 1: Situation of international students before and after the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and their future**

~Situation of international students in Japan affected by the great earthquake~

The Great Eastern Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011 has severely affected the lives of international students in Japan. Almost one half of the international students temporarily went to their home countries while about 10% quitted their schools and went home permanently.

Only 60% of international students who had already planned to study in Japan actually entered Japanese schools. Meanwhile, 70 to 80% of international students in Kinki Region stayed on even after the earthquake.



### **Members' opinions**

- Once some students decide to cancel or postpone their visit to Japan and turn down entrance to Japanese universities, it is quite difficult for them to get permission to enter Japan or get admitted to Japanese universities. Therefore, flexible regulations should be made to pave the road for such international students, so that they can resume living in Japan and fulfill their wishes.
- Many schools in Kinki Region do not have the system of accepting those students who attended schools affected by the great earthquake.
- Because of the great earthquake, the number of international students from China, Korea and Taiwan has sharply dropped. It is necessary to take measures to improve the situation such as increasing the opportunities to receive short stay students. At the same time, it is also important to spread the information that Kyoto is safe and peaceful.

### **FY2010 Report was presented to the mayor.**

On behalf of the Kyoto City Council of Multicultural Policy, Chairman Ogawa presented the FY2010 Report to Mr. Daisaku Kadokawa, the Mayor of Kyoto. The report includes providing multicultural education at schools and nurseries, multilingual governmental information and the implementation of multicultural activities in communities. Mayor Kadokawa mentioned that it is very important to create a multicultural city through the joint endeavor of city and the citizens. He added that he wishes that the interaction between various cultures will give new energy to the local communities.



- Those who would like to obtain the report may contact us or visit our webpage.

## **Report 2: The problems of international students in Kyoto (based on the questionnaire)**

There are more than 5000 international students studying at different universities and junior colleges in Kyoto. Many of them do not know any source of information and consultation other than their universities. All of the newly arrived international students face common problems. Many of them will have difficulty in starting their basic elements of daily life such as finding lodging, getting utilities contract, internet service, and opening bank account. After graduation, some students would want to get job in Japan. However, linguistic and cultural differences will create obstacles against them.

### **Members' opinions**

- I hope sources of information and consultation for international students will be increased. Some universities assign one Japanese volunteer student for each international student to help them in their daily life in Japan.
- Kyoto city provides multilingual information for foreign students such as publishing a guidebook on life in Japan. The city must consider ways of providing such information so that those in need will definitely get it. The creation of a website that will provide useful information about life in Kyoto and where international students could share their common problems would be of great help for them.

## **Exchanging opinions with the members of Filipino community**

About 1000 people from the Philippines live in Kyoto. Three members of “Kyoto Pag-asa Filipino Community” which consists of about 100 Filipino residents of Kyoto were invited to the meeting. They presented their situation and discussed it with the council members. Special emphasis was placed on the problem of children of Filipino origin. This category includes children who were born in the Philippines and later came to Japan and those who were born and raised in Japan. Since such children cannot speak Japanese, it is difficult for them to intermingle with their classmates and their local community. Even though some of them speak Japanese because they were born in Japan, their parents often do not speak Japanese.

Members' opinions on this issue are as follows:

- It would be a great help for those who do not understand Japanese if lectures on the education and future plan for their children were provided.
- It would be better if more opportunities for the Filipino children of various cultural backgrounds to interact with each other are arranged.



## **Measures taken by Kyoto City regarding International Students**

As Kyoto is regarded as a “city of higher education and universities”, it has set the goal to increase the number of international students in Kyoto to 10000 by 2017. Kyoto city has designed various programs for the comfortable and attractive life of international students in Kyoto.

### **-Kyoto International Students Information Site-**

This website provides useful information such as “Orientation on Life in Japan” for those international students who entered Japan recently. At “Kokoka Ryugakusei Net”, international students can exchange information with companies and communities.

The site address is: <http://www.kcif.or.jp/ryusite/index.html>

### **-National Health Insurance Subsidy Program-**

Subsidy program is applied to those international students who study on their own expenses. It aims at encouraging international students to have the national health insurance policy so as to get medical treatments without being worried about the financial burden. The city will cover a fraction of their insurance fee (¥700 per month).

### **-Complementary Service Programs for International Students-**

“Ryugakusei Okoshiyasu Pass”: With this pass those international students who attend any university in Kyoto can enter some cultural facilities in the city free of entrance fees for a certain period.

International Students are also invited to some events such as the concerts of Kyoto Symphony Orchestra, Citizens’ Kyogen plays, and Jidai Festival. “*Kokusai Gakusei Kouryukai*” or international students exchange party will provide students a chance to interact with each other.

For further information visit “Kyoto International Students Information Site”.

## Notice

If you have any opinion regarding the newsletters and the council, please contact us at the following address. Anyone can take part in the meetings as an observer.

For the back numbers, please contact us below.

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