

# Kyoto City Council on Multicultural Policy

## Newsletter No.8

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

Published on Jan. 31, 2013

### The second council meeting of FY2012 was held.

<Time and Date>

9:00A.M. to 11:00A.M. Tue. Sep. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2012

<Venue>

Kyoto Consumer and livelihood Center

<Agenda>

Interaction between foreign residents and community residents

~Measures for disaster prevention ~



Ms. Hikaru TOKI, Secretary of Japan Council for the Managers of Multicultural Symbios is, was invited to the second council meeting to give a lecture about the measures for disaster prevention for multicultural communities. After the presentation of the report, members of the council discussed the issues.

### Report

## Efforts of communities for disaster prevention with multicultural approach

In the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake, people's awareness about disaster prevention has increased. Therefore, everyone living in the same community must cooperate with each other in implementing disaster prevention activities. It is important for people with different cultures and languages to communicate with each other actively and regularly, and to fill the gap of knowledge and awareness about disaster prevention among various people. Community as a whole must implement such activities with multicultural approach.

### **~Large-scale disasters and people of foreign origin ~**

Many of people of foreign origin have less knowledge about disaster prevention. Because of the language barrier, they often have difficulty in obtaining enough information needed during disaster. Moreover, lack of communication with their neighbors on regular basis hinders establishing relations for mutual cooperation. If a disaster prevents them from applying for the extension of their stay in Japan, this will further add to their sufferings.

### **~The importance of sending quick and accurate information~**

Foreign visitors and residents do not receive disaster prevention education. Hence, if a large-scale disaster occurs, they would panic. Some might even not be able to get the information needed to save them from risk because of insufficient Japanese language ability. Therefore, it is very important to provide information quickly and accurately in easy Japanese and other major languages about the situation of disaster, evacuation centers, and how to return to their home countries.



### **~ How to carry out disaster prevention measures with multicultural approach in the communities ~**

Recently many local governments encourage the participation of foreign residents in their emergency drills. They also hold training sessions for volunteer interpreters for the emergency.

Some foreign residents want to join the communities of the area where they reside to help relieve the victims of disasters. If citizens with different cultures and languages participate together in the regular disaster prevention drills, these foreign citizens can easily carry out relief activities during real disastrous situations.

It is also important for city governments and local international foundations to cooperate with each other during the disaster. Eight local international foundations from five prefectures and three government designated cities in Kinki Region have signed an agreement to help each other in sending volunteer interpreters to the disaster stricken area during emergencies. Today such collaboration is spreading in Tokai and Hokuriku regions, too.

### **- Members' Opinions -**

- It is important to establish such a relation between Japanese and non-Japanese citizens that they can call on each other "Lets evacuate together". It is important to enhance a multi-cultural community by encouraging foreign residents to join the autonomic community organizations.
- Universities which have many foreign students, hotels which accommodate many foreign visitors and their local community residents should collaborate with each other to carry out the disaster prevention drills, so that people with different nationalities and languages can help each other during a disaster victim.
- The type of natural disasters differs from country to country and from region to region. There are some foreigners who are less aware of the disaster prevention. It is necessary to teach such people about the disasters of Japan. Foreign residents themselves should also make efforts to learn more about disaster prevention.
- There are inflated rumors in some countries saying that most of the Japanese territory has sunk because of the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami. It is possible that some foreign residents might get such baseless rumors from their native countries. Therefore, it is very important to impart accurate information during disasters.
- Many foreign students are interested in participating in the rescue activities. Therefore, it is recommended to create a volunteer program for such students.
- It is important to provide fliers and pamphlets about disaster prevention to foreign residents. When making disaster drill fliers, it is better to use simple Japanese and add a map to it. About the Manual for the Operation of Evacuation Centers, the pamphlet for disaster prevention and the handbook published by the City of Kyoto.

### **-Kyoto City Comprehensive Disaster Drill-**

Kyoto City Comprehensive Disaster Drill was held on September 1<sup>st</sup>, commemorating the “National Disaster Prevention Day”, which attracted about 5000 participants.

The drill was held at Iwakura-Higashi Park in Sakyo Ward. About 50 foreign residents and volunteer interpreters for disasters also participated in the drill. They attended bucket brigade and other activities. They also practiced how to set up a make shift “Foreign Resident Support Center” which is supposed to help foreign residents during disaster.

Medical interpretation training was also conducted for volunteer interpreters in which the participants played the role of doctors and injured people who have difficulty in communicating in Japanese.



**Overnight stay at the evacuation center as a disaster drill  
hosted by Kyoto International Community House.**

An overnight stay at the evacuation center as a part of disaster drill was conducted on October 13, at the Kyoto International Community House. About 50 people including some foreign residents and volunteer interpreters participated in this event. This is the third round of the event. Local residents participated in this event for the first time.

The foreign residents tried the earthquake simulation vehicle and learned how to cope with an earthquake. The participants ate alpha rice which is often used as an emergency food, and exchanged opinions about the life at an evacuation center during the disaster drill.



**"Manual for the Operation of Evacuation Centers"**

The City of Kyoto published a Manual for the Operation of Evacuation Centers.

In case many foreign residents are evacuated to an evacuation center, some volunteer interpreters must be provided, and the bulletin board should be written in easy Japanese. This manual can be downloaded from the following webpage.

<http://www.city.kyoto.lg.jp/gyozai/page/0000131471.html>

**"Earthquake and Fire: how to protect yourself from disasters"**

This pamphlet describes how to protect yourself when an earthquake or fire occurs, how to call an ambulance and other information in Japanese, English, Chinese and Korean.

This pamphlet can be downloaded from the following webpage.

<http://www.city.kyoto.lg.jp/shobo/page/0000079443.html>

**"Manual of What to Do During Earthquakes and Emergency"**

This pocket-handbook contains information on what to be taken during evacuation in the event of an earthquake and other disasters, how to use phone voice mail service, how to call an ambulance and other important information in five languages (Japanese, English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish).

This handbook is available at the Kyoto International Community House.

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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