

# Kyoto City Council on Multicultural Policy

## Newsletter No.10

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### **The fourth council meeting of FY2012 was held.**

<Time and Date>

10:00 a.m. to Noon, Thu. January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2013

<Venue>

Kyoto International Community House

<Agenda>

Interaction between foreign residents and community residents ~International students ~

The written report on the proceedings of the meetings of FY2012



In the fourth meeting, members of Kyoto City Council on Multicultural Policy reported the activities going on at an international student dormitory and a Christian church in Kyoto. After the reports, members exchanged their opinions. They also talked about the written report on the proceedings of the meetings of FY2012 which is to be submitted to the city of Kyoto.

### **Report 1 - Kokusai Joshi Ryugakusei Centre -**

Report on the multicultural events held by the Kokusai Joshi Ryugakusei Centre (hereafter called the Centre)

### **Report 2 - Kyoto Missionary Church -**

Report on the cleaning the surroundings and welfare activities of the international students who gather at Kyoto Missionary Church

## Report 1

# The activities of Kokusai Joshi Ryugakusei Centre

Kokusai Joshi Ryugakusei Centre is an international student dormitory established in 1967. It is funded by the membership fees. It accommodated 521 female students from 52 countries in 45 years.

### ~ Activities of Kokusai Joshi Ryugakusei Centre ~

#### ◎ Students' interaction with local residents

Some members of the Centre who live in the vicinity serves as volunteer host mothers called "Kyoto mothers" for the students for a long time. We have a program called the "Open Family Program" which aims at promoting interaction between the students and their host families. Through this program, we have created a good environment for the students to concentrate on their studies.

#### ◎ Experiencing traditional events and culture

The students watched traditional events such as Aoi Festival, Gion Festival and Jidai Festival with "Kyoto mothers". We also invited them to traditional culture programs such as Kimono wearing, tea ceremony and flower arrangement and trying seasonal foods such as *Osechi* at the New Year 's Day, and *Chirashizushi* at Doll's Festival.



#### ◎ Three biggest events of the Centre

The Centre organizes "Early summer festival", "Traditional Japanese music concert", and "Recycling market". We invite many other international students in Kyoto and encourage interaction between them and the students and members of the Centre.

#### ◎ Problems of the international students

- Because of the deference in customs and religions, sometimes international students have difficulty in getting accustomed to the dormitory life which might cause troubles among them. Therefore, we explain Japanese customs and culture to them in detail.
- International students have difficulty in making Japanese friends. Lack of communication between the students is also observed. We are making efforts to provide them many opportunities to interact with Japanese of various ages including the members of the Open Family Program.
- Because of difficulty in communication, students suffer from stress and psychological disorders. In such cases, members of the Open Families and staffs of the Centre talk to them about their problems. Sometimes, they need medical consultation.

### ◎ Problems in supporting international students

- The Centre has some problems such as aging of the members and difficulty in recruiting new members because of the change in women's lifestyle. Therefore it is very important to secure volunteers who can support the international students.
- Members must cover most of the costs of the Centre's activities. However, it is very important to secure a stable source of revenue so as to support these students on a continuous basis.

\* This Centre fulfilled its role and was closed in March, 2013. However, those who lived in this Centre are serving as bridges between Japan and their mother countries, and are successful in many parts of the world.

## Report 2 Kyoto Missionary Church

Kyoto Missionary Church in Higashiyama Ward was established in January 2004. About 30 to 50 people attend this church on weekdays and about 130 people on Sundays. Out of these about 90% are international students. 90% of the international students are from China and others are from Indonesia, Korea, Thailand, Myanmar, Jamaica and some other countries. Besides church activities, these students also devote themselves to the cultural activities and volunteer works.

### ~ Activities of Kyoto Missionary Church ~

#### ◎ Helping the daily life of international students

The international students in this church share houses so that they can save the house rent and utility fees. Sharing the house also helps them spending an orderly life. They will be able to share their problems with other members in the house, thus, they will avoid becoming homesick or stressed.

#### ◎ Blending in the community

The students voluntarily clean the banks of Kamo River and the vicinity of the church periodically so as to contribute to the community. They also perform their ethnic dances and music at the nearby elderly home. Some students visit elders, solitary families and handicapped people in the neighbourhood periodically. This creates a sense of cooperation and understanding between the students and community residents.



### ◎ Problems of the international students

- Since they are taught together with Japanese students at school, they need high academic ability. Since they don't understand Japanese well, they are often scolded by the employees when they work as part timers, and they become stressed. It is very difficult to study and work at the same time.
- They have difficulty in paying university tuition fees and their living expenses.
- Some would give up studying in Japan because they could not get accustomed to the life in Japan.

### ◎ Problems of the church

- We need a wider space that could accommodate 130 people.
- We are short of budget and human resource.
- We are now working together with those foreigners who used to study in Kyoto to establish an NPO which could support these students to earn a steady livelihood and academic skills. We hope that they will play active roles in the world.

Through this NPO, we hope to launch the following projects.

- To build a dormitory for international students so that it would help their lives physically and mentally, and assist them in their studies, too.
- Offering employment assistance to the students so that they can find a job in Japan. We also hope that they can make use of the skills they have acquired here in their countries.
- To take over the Japanese classes operated by the volunteers of the church.

## **The report on the proceedings of the meetings of FY2012 was submitted to the Mayor.**

Ms. Shoko NISHIOKA, the chairman of the Kyoto City Council on Multicultural Policy submitted a report on the proceedings of the meetings of FY2012 to the Mayor of Kyoto on March 26, 2013 on behalf of the Council.



## ~ Proposals ~

### 1. Train people who can implement multicultural symbiosis.

Support the creation of a network.

- The city should make efforts to train people who can implement multicultural symbiosis, and can serve as bridges between different groups and concerned people.
- The city should support the creation of a network of people who are engaged in the multicultural symbiosis.

### 2. Improve the method of providing information to foreign residents.

Provide everyone an opportunity to learn from each other, regardless of nationality and culture.

- The city should provide foreign residents the information about daily life in Japan, Japanese classes and disasters.
- The city should provide foreign residents the opportunities to learn Japanese language and customs. It should also increase the chances for every citizen regardless of their nationality and culture to learn from each other.

### 3. Revitalization of community through multicultural symbiotic approach

- The city should encourage communities to increase interaction with foreign residents; and to encourage foreign residents to participate in the community autonomy committees and local events.
- The city should make efforts to encourage foreign residents to play some role in the society and to revitalize their communities.

After receiving this proposal, Mayor Kadokawa said that he would like to help train people who can act as a link between various concerned groups and foreign residents, support the creation of a network, and promote multicultural symbiosis in the communities.

\* If you want a copy of this report, contact the following office. This report is uploaded on the website of International Relations Office of Kyoto City.

### 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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