

Summary:

In this discussion, many suggestions for local potential, communication and volunteer coordination, were made in order to construct a multi-cultural society where foreign residents do not isolate themselves.

It is especially important that foreign citizens, do not remain on the side of the supported people in fact of a disaster, but become regular partners with the Japanese and try to be actively involved in structuring our society together. Visitors from abroad will feel relief thought an interpretation support service provided by foreign residents. Foreign residents will be great help for supporting the local community through the activities, such as taking affected people like elderly or handicapped to evacuation center and carrying water or food. In the Kumamoto Earthquake, many foreign citizens indeed participated actively on the side of supporters, taking part in managing evacuation centers and distributing rice to the disaster evacuees.

16:30~17:30 Information Exchange Session
Fairtrade link café, Entrance Robby, International Center 1F
Speakers and participants exchanged information regarding specific matters in a friendly atmosphere having tea and sweets.

Smile with in information exchange session



Program Started, and the Role of the International Association

[Roles of International Associations]

Through the support activities of foreigners in Kumamoto Earthquakes, we renewed our recognition that we need to respond to foreigners assuming they have no knowledge of earthquakes as Japanese do when we translate disaster information or daily living information at evacuation sites into various languages or rewrite them into easy Japanese. For example, foreigners had no idea that schools become the evacuation sites at the time of disasters in Japan and they felt uneasy not being able to follow Japanese people's behavior.

Implement our foreigner support activities and deliver safety and security more effectively, It was also reaffirmed that to we need to construct relationships among residents including foreigners in the community regularly.

Furthermore, foreigners become more vulnerable in disasters due to differences of languages and culture. However, at the time of Kumamoto earthquake, foreigners operated evacuation sites by themselves (Kumamoto University) and reeved off their own cuisine (Filipino Association, Chinese technical trainees, and others to evacuees). They appreciated their neighbors for asking them whether they were ok or not.

The International Association has a role of fostering such relationships with Japanese for foreigner They have carried on exchange events for foreigners and Japanese, and classes for Japanese to understand different cultures, as well as Japanese classes for foreigners. Collaborating with local governments, the role of not making foreigners feel isolated is being expected.

[Start up Programs – Japanese Language Courses – the Basement of Multicultural Society]

Everybody easily collaborates and helps each other in time of need. However, when we should know each other in daily life the collarbone and help work more efftely. With these relations, we can realize the society where no one is left isolated at the time of disaster, and foreigners can also help evacuate people with disabilities or seniors. In order to construct such communities, we need to have some measures to activate communication among residents.

Resuming the Japanese classes in the East District, suspended at the time of the Kumamoto Earthquakes, as our goal, KIF has already started to form the relationships with which we mutually help each other at the time of disaster through exchange with foreigners and Japanese, making good use of the Japanese education start-up program by the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

Many Japanese hope to have exchange with foreigners, but they should have thought they must speak in English whenever they see foreigners. Therefore KIF wants to stress that exchange means emotion not language. One of KIF's goals is that Japanese citizens become students of their own language and learn how to use easy Japanese through actively talking with non-native speakers. This exchange between Japanese and non-Japanese is a new method of Japanese language learning in Kumamoto City which KIF wants to spread.

Present situation of the Japanese Language Courses (updated October 2016): There are language courses at the Kumamoto City International Center (Chuo Ward) and Kikuyo Town's "Kyaroppia" Hikari no Mori Citizen Center (Kita Ward). From April 2017 classes in the Higashi Ward will be restarted and new classes in Minami and Nishi Ward are planned.

Furthermore, KIF is collaborating on the Kumamoto Earthquake Project together with Kumamoto Prefectural University, Osaka University, and Yokohama National University to research about foreign citizens affected by the Kumamoto Earthquake. The results will be used to establish and better manage those Japanese language courses.



KEQP had interview in Mashiki Town