

NIA LETTER

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NIA Official Facebook



On the Cover

International Exchange and Communication Meeting (Top Left), Korean Festival during Golden Week (Top Right), Simple Japanese Workshop (Bottom Left), Editing Meeting for the NIA LETTER (Bottom Right)

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Efforts for Multicultural Coexistence

— What we all can do —



Have you ever heard the term “multicultural coexistence”? Multicultural coexistence is when different cultures, including Japanese nationals and foreign residents, live together in one society while recognizing and respecting the differences in each other’s cultures.

In Japan, regardless of the population size, the number of foreign residents living in Japan has increased. Even in Niigata, there are many foreign residents that have come to study or work. On May 29th (Sat.), 2021, the Niigata International Association held a symposium around building a thriving community that anyone, regardless of nationality or culture, could take an active role in. The symposium, called the “Multicultural Coexistence Symposium – Together, Let’s Build Our Town,” took place at the Niigata Nippo MEDIA SHIP.

I Keynote Speech “Can we change? Moving towards a Multicultural Coexisting Society”

Speaker: Ms. Hasebe Mika, Associate Professor, Meiji Gakuin University Center for Liberal Arts (Participated Remotely)

Ms. Hasebe Mika is an associate professor of sociology and multicultural discourse at Meiji Gakuin University’s Center for Liberal Arts. She explained the condition of foreign residents in Japan, how the national government is moving forward with methods of hiring foreign workers, and how local governments can create policies on multicultural coexistence. Then Ms. Hasebe spoke about research that was conducted in Kanagawa prefecture’s Ichou Housing Estate (a widespread public housing area where many people from foreign nationalities live) as an example of multicultural coexistence.

Furthermore, she expressed that in order to realize a multicultural coexisting society, it is important for foreign residents to feel that they are accepted by Japanese society, and for Japanese society to consciously create opportunities for foreign residents to play an active role in their communities.



II Lecture “The Challenge of New Universities ~ Creating innovation and diversity ~”

Speaker : Mr. Ahmed Shahriar, President of Sanjo City University

Mr. Ahmed Shahriar, the president of the newly opened Sanjo City University, spoke about the unique educational curriculum at his school, among other topics. He also spoke in detail about the “Industry and University Cooperative Training,” which is designed to help students connect the “knowledge” they gain at university with “experience” through practical training at local companies, and develop their imagination and creativity further.

Mr. Shahriar said that Sanjo City University is considering accepting international students in the future, but for now, the first step toward multicultural coexistence for the school is to make efforts to adapt to the local environment by accepting local residents as students.



Participant’s Opinions

Niigata City • “T”

When I saw the flyer for the symposium, I decided to join because I thought it was a chance for me to learn about the current conditions of foreign residents. In recent years, people have been calling for “equality” so that more foreign immigrants can enter Japan, but in reality, I learned that we have to think about policies before we can have equality. I was reminded that, in order to multiculturally coexist, we should not only be aware of actively accepting people from overseas, but we must also create an environment where we can accept them at any time by developing policies and measures.

Shibata City • “F”

I was curious about multicultural coexistence, so I decided to join. I listened to the talks, and it completely changed my mind on foreign residents in the prefecture. As Japan’s population continues to age and shrink, and the number of foreign residents is increasing, so I understood that overseas workers are valuable.

The thing that surprised me most was a case from outside of the prefecture. In this example, the foreign families living in a housing complex became wealthy and left the area, leaving the remaining Japanese nationals in an even more difficult situation. The symposium made me realize that, for the sake of our own communities, we must think about living alongside foreign residents.

Changes at the Entrance

At the symposium, there were multilingual signs and pictograms. There was also non-alcohol-based hand sanitizer alongside regular alcohol-based sanitizer. We carefully created a space that was conscious of many different kinds of participants.



III Introduction: —Seeing Niigata’s Multicultural Coexistence by Numbers

Published by : Niigata International Association (NIA)

The leaders at NIA explained the data on the current state of foreign residents.

Number of Foreign Residents living in Niigata	Nationalities of Foreign Residents	Visa Status of Foreign Residents
Total: 18,309 (Total percentage of residents: 0.8%)	#1 China- 4,893	#1 Permanent Residents- 5,137
Niigata City- 5,899	#2 Vietnam- 3,500	#2 Technical Intern Trainees- 4,652
Nagaoka City- 2,445	#3 The Philippines- 2,704	#3 International Students- 2,188
Joetsu City- 1,708	#4 Korea- 1,700	#4 Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/ International Relations- 1,215
Minami Uonuma City- 1,025	#5 Indonesia- 715	#5 Spouse or Child of a Japanese National- 1,166
Kashiwazaki City- 917		



(June 2020, Ministry of Justice)

IV Panel Discussion – What is necessary to have a multicultural coexisting society?

With associate professor Ms. Hasabe Mika as the moderator, we had a panel discussion. The panelists were Sanjo City University’s President Ahmed Shahriar; Nguyen Thi Hong Sinh, a personal care assistant working at Niigata City’s Welfare Center; and Ms. Tokita Miwa, the director of Global Support Association, which is a technical intern management team that supports interns by finding companies that accept them. The panelists took the stage to discuss the efforts to accept foreign residents in the community and the attitudes necessary for to create a multicultural coexisting society from their unique perspectives.



Students’ Opinions

Ms. Zhao Rongjunzi, a student at Niigata University from China:

I was really encouraged when I listened to President Ahmed Shahriar’s lecture. President Shahriar said that all of the experiences and skills he has gained so far has not been through his own abilities, but that he was supported by his relationships with Japanese people. I really felt the same way about that. Actually, when I had just arrived in Niigata, it was really tough for me.



However, I gradually became better at speaking Japanese, and now I am encouraged by everyone in Niigata. Nearly every day I face culture shock, but finding my place in the world is strangely interesting. I would like to continue having cross-cultural communications and talking about various things with people in Niigata.

Ms. Sai Prakash Shidhaye, a student at the Graduate Institute for Entrepreneurial Studies from India:

The thing that I felt most at the multicultural coexistence symposium was my responsibility as an exchange student.



I really felt that, in order for exchange students to make the most of their chance to study abroad, one of our duties is to create opportunities to interact with the host society.

Regardless of the scale of Japan’s population, the number of foreign residents is increasing every year, so we are experiencing globalization. I now feel that I want to actively promote cross-cultural and social exchanges between Japan and India. I understood how “exchange students” do more than just study: they become a part of their local community and form bonds with the local population, and their contributions to society are important.

Community Action Introducing a Multicultural Coexistence Coordinator!

The first multicultural coexistence coordinator in our prefecture, with experience in the Local Revitalization Group!



Shibata City Local Revitalization Group
Multicultural Coexistence Coordinator
Mr. Sakata Yuuki

Mr. Sakata is from Niigata City's Chuo Ward. When he was 20, he studied abroad in the Philippines for a short time, where he developed an interest in foreign language education. After returning home to Japan, he reentered university and made his debut as a part-time Japanese language teacher.

After graduating from university, he became a full-time instructor, and in 2019, through the Japan Foundation, he was dispatched to Myanmar as a "Japanese for Daily Life Coordinator."

From April 2021, he was made the Coordinator for Multicultural Coexistence for Shibata City's Local Revitalization Group.

Basic Information about Shibata City:

Population: 95,687 people (as of March 2021)

Number of Foreign Residents: 645 people (as of March 2021)

Nearly 90% of these residents have lived in Japan for a long time or are workers. Roughly 4% are foreign exchange students.

Top 3 Resident Statuses: (As of March 2021)

Permanent Residents: 203

Technical Intern: 202

Spouse or Child of a Japanese National: 39

Shibata's famous products: asparagus,

Shibata beef, Echigo-hime strawberries

Recommended spots: Shibata Castle, Tsukioka hot springs

What is a Coordinator for Multicultural Coexistence?

Hello everyone, I'm Yuuki Sakata. From April 2021, I became the coordinator for multicultural coexistence in Shibata City. What my job mainly consists of is assisting foreign residents that live in the community, and also facilitating exchanges between Japanese nationals and foreign residents or foreign coworkers. Regardless of one's nationality or culture, we can both understand each other, and I help create those experiences.



A typical day working at the city hall

Our goal is very big, but as I just took over in this position, I'll do my best to understand the current conditions and needs of our foreign residents.

From those who provide information at various institutions, volunteer teachers who are making efforts to teach Japanese in the community, school staff who are involved with children with foreign roots, and companies that hire foreign staff--there are many people involved in the environment surrounding a multicultural coexisting society



With members of Shibata City's Japanese Class (we cooperate with various events and Japanese language volunteer teacher)

We are already offering multifaceted support, but we also are looking at how we can help from a policy point of view. Going forward, based on the problems and needs we heard, we would like to plan various events and improve our system for distributing information.



Community Revival Group has no limits--joined FM Shibata. (Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 11:45-12:00 on "Ask the Community Revival Group")

What We All Can Do

In order to create a multicultural coexisting society, we all must do our part. This is because it is absolutely necessary for communities to have multicultural coexistence. When you hear the word "multicultural coexistence," you might think it will

be a tough and difficult discussion, but there's no need to get defensive. First, just "knowing" about it is enough.



(Interviewing an ALT to collecting information for the multilingual newsletter "Shibata Ayame News")

Try Starting Small

For example, when you watch the news or read the newspaper about foreign news, you're gaining a little bit more knowledge. Try saying hello to the foreign people that live around you. If you're interested, please come the next multicultural coexisting society event in Shibata City. Without "knowing," you won't be able to understand, and you won't be able to build relevant connections.

As for me, I believe everyone's awareness can change and connect with multicultural coexistence.

In Conclusion

If there's an event you want to participate in, or if there's something you want to know more about, please don't hesitate to ask me. Let's work together to reach our goal of realizing a multicultural coexisting society.

Shibata City Hall,
Shimin Machizukuri Shien Division.
TEL: 0254-28-9640

Introducing our 2021 Exchange Student Representatives!

At the Niigata International Association, foreign exchange students that are eager to join events can register for our "International Exchange Student Group." In 2021, we had 32 new exchange students register from universities within Niigata prefecture. Exchange Student Members can participate in workshops organized by the association to learn about multicultural coexistence and support for foreign residents. They can also cooperate and participate in exchange events requested by schools, international exchange groups, and municipalities, where they can introduce the culture in their home countries and talk about their experiences living and studying abroad.

Introducing 2021 Exchange Student Representatives!

Recent Activities



Online Meeting (4/23)



Golden Week Korea Festival (5/2)



Multicultural Symposium (5/29)



Simple Japanese Workshop (7/17)

2021 Exchange Student Representatives (32 people)



Zhao Rongunzi
China



Jhu Jianti
China



Lui Wenheng
China



Zhasuna
China



Kang Zewen
China



Zhang Tongtong
China



Yin Zhaomou
China



Wang Chaomin
China



Ran Jianyin
China



Lee Yulee
Korea



Thant Sin
Myanmar



Vo Tien Thong
Vietnam



Ha Phuong Nam
Vietnam



Shen Zhiming
China



Ngo Minh Chu
Vietnam



Chau Tuan Kien
Vietnam



Jiang Shangkun
China



Le Thangquang
Vietnam



Muhammad Abdul
Karim Montanaro
Indonesia



Al Amin
Bangladesh



Korathotage
Chathumini Perera
Sri Lanka



Li Simeng
China



Regina Ancilla
Natasya
Indonesia



Li Xiangwei
China



Le Cong Dat
Vietnam



He Yaoqiang
China



Chen Junkang
China



Xia Yibu
China



Sai Prakash
Shidhaye
India



Mao Yuchang
China



Liu Xinyi
China



Yang Liangwen
China

More details about
Exchange Student
Members here:



From the Foreign Resident Consultation Center: Connecting Niigata ~ Cooperating with Various Specialists ~

FRCN Foreign Resident
Consultation Center of Niigata
Official Facebook



What kind of problems do you think foreign residents usually face, and what difficulties do you think they have in living in Japan? At the consultation center, we cover a broad range of topics. We answer inquiries related to visa statuses, COVID-19, marriage and divorce, school for children, moving, and finding new work, to name a few. Of course, the center cannot solve all of these problems alone.

So that we can give you the most accurate information, it is absolutely necessary that we cooperate with specialists when consulting. At the Foreign Resident Consultation Center of Niigata, if you are worried about transferring your child's education from abroad, we have a knowledgeable expert on education that is available once a week. We also have an administrative scrivener who specializes in legal forms and paperwork, and an employee from the Tokyo Immigration Center; both are available for consultations once a month. Furthermore, we have a lawyer from the prefectural association of law who offers consultations at our office once every two months. Besides these, the Niigata Administrative Evaluation Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications provides us with advice regarding administrative consultations.

From here on, taking into account each person's culture, values, and way of thinking, we will lend an ear, using the resources and connections we have, and suggest the best solutions and help that we can.



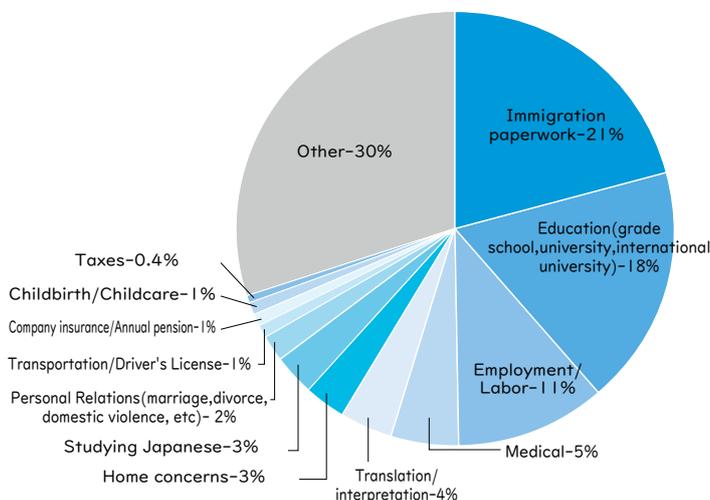
Foreign Resident Consultation Center of Niigata
(Inside Toki Messe building, 2nd floor)



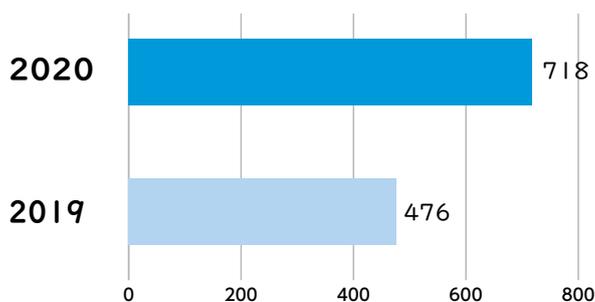
Look for our signs!

2020 Performance Report

[Types of consultation received]



[Comparing the number of consultations]



FRCN Foreign Resident Consultation Center of Niigata

📍 Niigata-shi, Chuo-ku, Bandaijima 5-1, Bandaijima Bldg. (Toki Messe) 2F
☎️ 025 - 241 - 1881 ✉️ nia10@niigata-ia.or.jp

● Types of consultations : Residence/visa status, jobs, education, healthcare, welfare, other consultations and general information about living in Japan

● Hours: Monday - Friday 10:00 ~ 17:00 (Reception closes at 16:30)

● Specialist Consultations (Reservations prioritized): Education, Administrative Scrivener (Gyosei-shoshi), Immigration Procedures, Legal Consultation



For details,
see here:
(our homepage)

Currently back in Japan

Ms. Ito Yumi



- She was born in Shibata City in 1992
- After graduating university, she worked for an international logistics company for about 1 year
- She was dispatched to Madagascar through the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers for 2 years, from 2017-2019.
- She attended graduate school in the U.K. and received her master's degree in Peace Studies
- Since returning to Japan, she is working at an NGO

COVID-19 Pandemic and Moving Forward

Because of COVID-19, we were forbidden to meet more than 3 people at a time, we couldn't leave our homes except to buy essential goods; and if we went out, we could only leave once a week—so it was very difficult to meet with my friends. To release stress, I took a soccer ball to the park by myself, or I blew bubbles and flew kites with a friend. I went running too, and from my room, I did muscle training, among other things. This was a chance for me to learn some performance skills, so I tried to learn how to do magic tricks and balloon art. I spoke with my family in Japan on the phone every week, and because of their support, I was able to get through the COVID-19 pandemic.



Winter in Bradford



With my friend

Exchange Student Life in the U.K.

Students came to my university from over 140 countries all over the world. I had roommates from Hungary, Sudan, India, and Iraq in my dorm. Although we were all studying different subjects, we became good friends, and we always cooked and ate dinner together every weekend. I get asked this a lot, so I want to talk about my schedule in graduate school. In one week, I took 3 required and 3 elective courses. It might not seem like much, but thinking back on it now, it was a pretty busy schedule. I was also studying Spanish too, so I would leave my dorm in the morning, come back for lunch, and then would come home again after 6 pm.



My roommates



With my friends from West Africa

Seeing and Feeling Multicultural Coexistence in the U.K.

From the start of the pandemic, many people assumed Asian people were spreading the virus around the world, and I also experienced discrimination. When walking among a lot of British people, as the only Japanese person, I was asked about my job, and I was not allowed into stores on some excuse, and locals suddenly began verbally abusing me while I was shopping. It is difficult to explain the U.K.'s culture or people in one word, but I felt that it's becoming multiracial because of an increase in immigration. Black Lives Matter demonstrations happened often, and I thought the U.K. was more sensitive to the issue of race than Japan is. However, I was able to see the beautiful U.K. that everyone imagines. People spoke with elegant English, and there was a gentle atmosphere of sophistication; if someone was having difficulty, others were willing to lend a hand.

Lockdown

From the end of March, the U.K. went into lockdown. Thankfully, all of my in-person classes had finished just before the lockdown started, so I was able to work on my thesis while receiving guidance online for the last few months. In August 2020, the U.K. had their own Go To Eat campaign, which lasted only one month. From Mondays to Wednesdays, you could get half off at restaurants, so I would go to cafes to work on my thesis during that time.



Football team



Black Lives Matter Demonstration



Lockdown



Bradford Street

U.K. (The full name is: The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland—the longest name in the world!)

Population: 66.8 million people

National language: English

Land area: 245,000 km² (about 2/3rd the size of Japan)

Sports such as soccer (the most popular), rugby, cricket and tennis all started in the U.K.!

« Data from »

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/uk/data.html>

NIA Foreign Language Tidbits: Russia Edition



To all readers of the NIA Letter, hello!

This is Ekaterina, from Russia. Thanks to you, I've been working as a Coordinator for International Relations in Niigata for 5 years now, so it really feels like Niigata is my second hometown.

Getting into it, are you looking forward to the autumn season? Although I love fall in both Russia and Japan, today I'd like to tell you about "Autumn in Russia."

In Japan, the red and orange maple leaves represent fall, but in Russia, we use the expression "Golden Autumn," because the main features are the bright yellow leaves of the beech and birch trees. Russia is a massive and widespread country, and the climate changes depending on the region, but in my hometown of Siberia, the leaves on the trees become very beautiful from around the middle of September. This is when the days become more autumn-like and the climate is very comfortable, so if you take a trip to Russia, I highly recommend this season.

Next, this is a feature of the Russian school system, but unlike Japanese schools which start in spring, our schools begin in fall. At the end of their 2-3 month long summer holiday, Russian students begin their school year on September 1st. We have a culture of giving flowers in Russia, so at the entrance ceremonies you can see many students holding bouquets of autumn flowers such as chrysanthemums, asters, gladiolus, and dahlia flowers to give to their teachers.



Autumn in Russia - School entrance ceremony



Autumn in Russia - Fall Scenery in Pushkin Town

Furthermore, autumn is the season for harvesting the fields and gardens, so we can enjoy the bounties of the earth. For me, when I think of autumn cuisine, foods such as oven-roasted vegetables with aromatic porcini mushrooms, and juice from berries (like lingonberries and cranberries) come to mind. Autumn is also the best season for making pies with apples or pears spiced with cinnamon. How about making some heart-warming autumn food too?



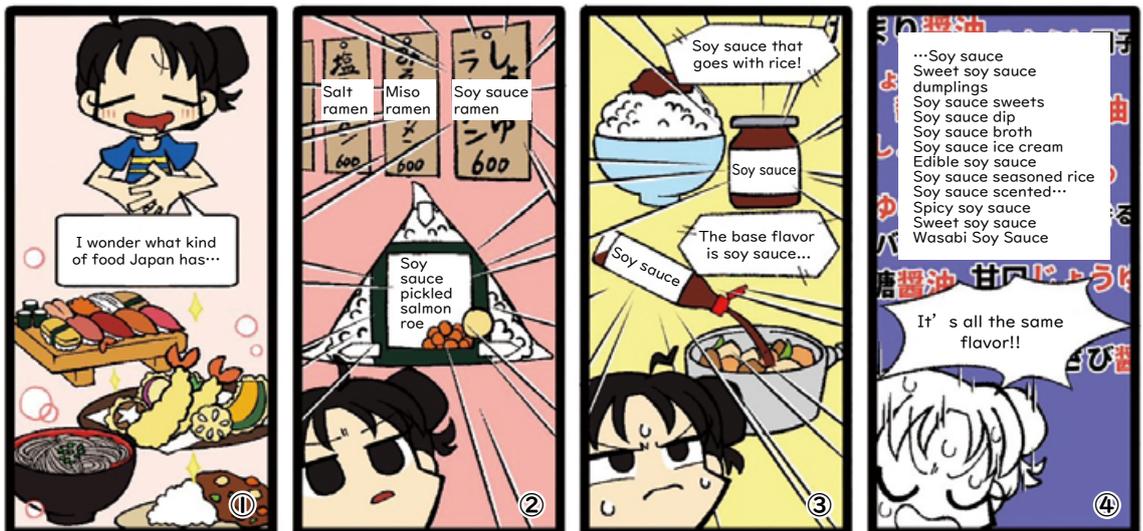
Exchange Student Comic

Episodes about experiences while living in Japan as an exchange student, in comic form!

#7

"Repertoire"

Pen Name:
Ookii



~ Message from the author ~



Thank you for letting me draw this edition's comic. Through this episode, you can look at Japan through another person's perspective, and you can feel the difference in culture, which is really fun. I hope you enjoyed this comic!

◇ Ookii ◇ Japan Animation & Manga College - Manga Creation Division, 2nd year

