

Multilingualization as a Tool to Foster Multicultural Coexistence from the Perspective of Community-Based Disaster Risk Management¹

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the frequent occurrence of natural disasters across the world reminds us of the need to accord mother nature with the fear and reverence that she deserves. The total number of large-scale natural disasters that have occurred during the 20 years that have passed since the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake of 1995 are almost too numerous to mention, but just to give a partial example, the disasters in which our organization has been involved in through relief efforts include the Neftegorsk Sakhalin earthquake of 1995, the Qayen earthquake in the northwestern region of Iran of 1997, the earthquake in northeastern Afghanistan of 1998, the İzmit earthquake in Turkey and the “921 earthquake” in Taiwan of 1999, the torrential rain in the Tokai region of 2000, the Gujarat earthquake in the western region of India of 2001, the Bam earthquake in the southeastern region of Iran of 2003, the Chūetsu earthquake in Niigata prefecture and Sumatra-Andaman earthquake (and tsunami) of 2004, Hurricane Katrina of 2005, which struck the southern gulf-coast of the United States, the Chūetsu offshore earthquake of 2007, the Wenchuan earthquake of 2008 (also widely referred to as the “Great Sichuan earthquake”), the (southern)

Haiti earthquake of 2010, the Great Tōhoku earthquake of 2011, and the Mount Ontake eruption of 2014. 2018 saw a rapid succession of abnormal meteorological and seismological phenomena with an earthquake occurring in northern Osaka prefecture in June, torrential rain striking western Japan in July, multiple large-scale typhoons occurring in August, and the occurrence of the Hokkaido Eastern Iburi earthquake in September.

In light of such circumstances, here, we will examine the concept of "multilingualization," a concept that is prone to being given low priority from the perspective of "community disaster risk management," and to explore its role in damage reduction and as a tool to prevent the exclusion of any and all local community members and to promote disaster preparedness.

2. Defining Community-Based Disaster Risk Management

Natural disasters are brought about by a combination of the occurrence of hazards (risk) and the presence of vulnerabilities, and in Hyogo Prefecture, where the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake occurred, efforts aimed at reducing natural disaster-related risk have been conducted in earnest. In addition to past efforts to improve the effectiveness of physical infrastructure, such as the construction of levees and dams, as well as efforts to train engineers, recent efforts have focused on enhancing "community-based disaster risk management," which aims to improve the disaster risk management capacity of local communities. The "Hyogo Protocol," which was adopted at the "United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction," held in January of 2005, provides concrete steps as outlined in the "Hyogo Framework," and the document also contains explicit references to "community-based disaster risk management," allowing for this concept to gain worldwide recognition. The key difference between community-based disaster risk management and traditional disaster risk management can be found in the emphasis on how communities need to exercise self-reliance, immediately after natural disasters occur, and how the autonomy

of local residents, in acting to provide “mutual assistance” to one another is at the core of this concept. For example, even in a developed nation like Japan, it is self-evident, based on past events, that the national government is unable to provide the expedient assistance that is needed in the immediate aftermath of large-scale disasters.

Before moving forward, it is necessary to provide a definition for “community” and “community-based disaster risk management,” and here, we will refer to a report issued by the Japan International Cooperation Agency International Cooperation Training and Research Group. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan’s Community Research Group, a community refers to a “group (of people or organizations) that share some form of a common attribute or even a level of camaraderie, brought together by such things as location of residence, shared goals, or common pursuits, and who engage in mutual communication with one another.” Furthermore, “local communities refer to groups brought together through common zones of everyday living (including the spaces in which members commute to and from school or work).” Here, we will refer to local communities as “a group in which members obtain a sense of belonging and solidarity, and express a level of loyalty that enables them to perform the duties asked of them, with the aim of serving mutual needs.” The scale of such communities, “is more granular than that defined by local bodies of municipal government, and is limited in scope, focused at a neighborhood level that is more closely connected to its local residents, enabling members to engage in mutual assistance.” Additionally, here, we will define community-based disaster risk management as “a disaster risk-reduction oriented approach to disaster risk management that allows for the efficient distribution and deployment of the limited resources of the national government and local community, while at the same time, fostering local community building, by going beyond the traditional approach to disaster risk management, in which emergency assistance and ongoing assistance is carried out by the national government in a top-down

manner.” Furthermore, “the primary focus is on humanitarian and community-driven disaster risk-reduction and community development, with the ultimate goal of fostering mutual assistance to increase the disaster-response capacity of the local community.”

The primary types of activities to increase disaster-preparedness include, “public assistance,” provided by entities, such as national and regional governmental offices, “mutual assistance,” which straddles the line between “public” and “private,” such as that provided by neighborhood organizations, organizations with familial ties, religious organizations, and civic groups like NPOs and NGOs, “individual-reliance,” which involves families or individuals acting to protect themselves, and finally, “external assistance,” such as that provided from overseas entities. Our primary focus will be on examining “mutual assistance,” for which it is important to note that the practice of such “mutual assistance” can vary widely between different communities. For example, while in some locales, NGOs and NPOs are actively engaged with the local community, there also exist communities that lack such engagement, resulting in non-existent community organization, in the truest sense of the word. Because of this disparity between communities, it must be recognized that there is more than just one, and possibly even a myriad of different solutions that can be adopted. It is imperative for each individual community to examine and implement the solution best suited to its needs, and toward this end, we propose that multilingualization can act as an effective tool in this process.

One unfortunate reality is that many communities fail to recognize the need for strengthening such disaster-management capacity, and are unable to actually evaluate the efficacy of such activities, until they experience, firsthand, the occurrence of a natural disaster. Such communities exhibit low awareness among local residents on the need for disaster risk-reduction, with very little incentive to take part in such “disaster-preparedness activities.” Such lack of awareness also acts as an obstacle for justifying adequate funding for such efforts. Considering that

disaster-management is a multi-phase cycle, that involves disaster-prevention (risk-reduction and mitigation), emergency measures taken in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, and the subsequent recovery and restoration efforts, and that the responsibility for implementing various efforts at different phases shifts between a number of different actors, it is absolutely imperative that such stakeholders work together to draw up a creatively planned, well thought-out solution. Here, we will specifically focus on “mutual assistance,” in terms of raising community members’ awareness (motivation), in guiding policy planning, and in establishing concrete mechanisms to implement policy.

3. Disaster Risk Management and Minorities from a Community Standpoint

3.1 The Diversity of Local Community Members

First, it is necessary to identify the various groups of members that come together to form the community. This composition of the community will vary widely, depending on community demographics, and there are a variety of different categories one can use to classify members. Groups can be differentiated by such factors that reflect the background and condition of individual members, such as gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, native language, place of origin, presence or lack of disability, and presence or lack of illness. Furthermore, in terms of affiliation, schools and workplaces are just some examples of the various groupings that emerge. What is important to note is that at no time do people choose to be affected by a natural disaster, and therefore it is imperative that none of the members that are counted as part of a community are excluded from any assistance provided. At the same time, in order to allow members to better protect each other’s lives, the more mutually assistive relationships that already exist within a community the better. With that said, when examining how communities operate on a typical, everyday basis, there are many individual members that do not feel a particular connection to certain groups within a given community.

More specifically, many members of the majority spend their everyday life, living with the perception, whether true or not, that there are certain minority groups within their community, with whom communication is difficult, rarely coming into contact with the members of such groups. Within such groups, we suggest that immigrant residents with foreign backgrounds, are often regarded as the most distant from the majority group and the most easily excluded from the community. However, during times of natural disaster, this way of thinking must undergo a transformation. In the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster, all community members, regardless of their backgrounds, are placed together in the same predicament, as disaster-affected individuals, allowing for members to connect and bond with each other, expressing empathy for the “other.” What is problematic is that it is often difficult for community members to expend the effort and resources, to forge these bonds in everyday life, for the purposes of preparing for a natural disaster that may or may not occur in the future. Even if a natural disaster were to not occur, it is absolutely imperative to gradually, over time, build in a mechanism, within disaster-preparedness activities, that enables community members to attain a sense of belonging and fulfillment that supersedes their ties and affiliations to the demographic categories listed above.

Next, we will examine how many residents living within Japan trace their origin to foreign countries, or are considered immigrants² of foreign extraction, and will further examine the characteristics of such groups. On a global level, the mobility of people traveling and migrating between different countries continues to increase, and a multitude of people migrate to foreign countries, under varying conditions and for various reasons. The word “immigrant,” is a relatively new concept in Japan, and for some, it conjures up images of the immigrants who left from Japan to settle in North and South America, as part of public policy programs implemented by the Japanese government over 100 years ago. One example of immigration that is relatively simple to understand for the Japanese public, is immigration related to famous athletes and politicians. In the

world of sports, sumo and soccer are notable for highlighting the successes of a large number of athletes of foreign extraction. For example, baseball player Yu Darvish was born to an Iranian father and Japanese mother, and he is considered to be an object of pride and admiration for the Japanese, as he represents Japan as a baseball player in the United States.

As of 2018, among the immigrant communities in Japan, the current number of non-Japanese nationals, excluding such short-term visitors as tourists, numbers roughly 2,500,000. In the interest of simplicity, we will just refer to this figure as the “foreigner population.” Foreign residents who do not possess Japanese citizenship can be further divided into 27 types of status of residence, and these classifications are used to accommodate residents with a variety of backgrounds, purposes of residence, and lifestyles. In terms of country of origin, China, followed by the Korean Peninsula, and then Vietnam, constitute the largest groups of foreign residents. It must be noted, however, that there are also many descendants of Japanese out-bound immigrants, who have returned to Japan as Nikkei returnees, which add significantly to the number of residents with foreign roots. In terms of nationality, this group is mainly comprised of residents from Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina. Excluding residents who retained latent Japanese citizenship status, this group is comprised of individuals who hold citizenship from South American countries, are second generation Nikkei descendants or the spouses of such individuals, or are third generation Nikkei individuals or their children (who must be unmarried minors), and all of these groups live in Japan under the “long-term residency” status. Another group is comprised of the individuals placed at the mercy of Japan’s imperialistic aggression leading up to World War II, namely, the ethnic Korean and Taiwanese residents of Japan. This group, is considered by the government to be “former holders of Japanese citizenship of foreign extraction,” and these individuals together with their descendants, are designated with a status of “special permanent resident,” and are also counted as part of the total foreigner

population. Even today, there are individuals who trace their residence in Japan back to their great-grandparents, have lived their entire lives in Japan, consider Japanese to be their first language, and have been educated and work in Japan, but are not included in the Japanese population, but rather, counted as members of the foreign population, unless they were to change their citizenship on their own volition. Annually, roughly 10,000-15,000 residents naturalize to become Japanese citizens, and the majority of those citizens are former “special permanent residents.” In the case of Yu Darvish, where one of the parents is a foreign national, such individuals are allowed to temporarily hold dual Japanese and foreign citizenship until the age of 22. Such individuals are considered as living in Japan as Japanese citizens, and therefore, they are not included in the foreigner population, despite their foreign roots. Taking all this into account, it can be said that a significantly large number of residents with foreign backgrounds make up part of Japan’s total combined population, and this number continues to further increase. Additionally, there are individuals who reside in Japan, and who have been unable to receive a status of residence, for one reason or another, and such unrecognized residents in Japan are not included in any of these statistics, but nonetheless, in the event of a natural disaster, these members must also be included in the process of mutual assistance.

In implementing community disaster risk management, it is absolutely imperative that all community members, including both foreign and immigrant residents, are actively included in each of its processes, such as risk assessment, risk analysis, planning for action, execution, monitoring, and evaluation, and for all members to be involved in the decision-making process.

3.2 Three Key Aspects to Promote Community Disaster Risk Management

In the aforementioned JICA reports, task-force discussions helped to identify 3 key aspects of community disaster-management, given as follows, (1) disaster-

related knowledge/risk awareness, disaster-related technology, and material resources, (2) a positive organizational environment (leadership, ownership, and incentive), and (3) a positive environment to facilitate in societal change, the formation of public policy, and in establishing societal rules.

(1) refers to an understanding of the mechanisms, conditions, and risks caused by various natural disasters, together with an understanding of disaster risk-management strategies, and the technical capacity required to provide emergency assistance and risk-management. In more specific terms, (2) refers to such things as the identification of trusted, effective leadership, the process through which leadership takes a central role in working together with all sub-groups of the community to arrive at a consensus, as well as the establishment of a sustainable environment in which members are able to gain such incentives as emotional satisfaction, social awareness, intellectual fulfillment, and economic gain through serving others. This aspect also highlights the need to engender feelings of belonging and to provide opportunities for participation in such activities. (3) refers to the measures necessary to foster a positive atmosphere that supports the community disaster-management activities outlined in (1) and (2), from a public standpoint, such as through adjustment of social public policy, in order to establish, within a community, a common understanding on everyday social customs, values, and human relationships. From the standpoint of minority groups, immigrant communities in particular are often excluded from the process outlined in (2), namely, the establishment of a positive organizational environment.

With that said, however, in order for these 3 key aspects to be appropriately addressed, it is necessary to ensure the equal community participation of this diverse mix of members. When planning for community disaster risk management, it is necessary to acknowledge that there exists substantial inequality, that arises from language difference, public policy, and in individual awareness, and this complicates efforts to engage in mutual assistance. Therefore, it is impera-

tive, to remedy this inequality, in order to allow all community members to be given equal opportunity, and to engage in community participation on an equal footing. This inequality can be seen in 3 different types of “barriers,” namely, the “language barrier,” “policy barrier,” and “empathic barrier.”

First, in terms of language, there are a significantly large group of residents in Japan for whom Japanese is not a native language, and who struggle to understand Japanese, the national language of Japan. By providing such residents with vital information in their native language, immigrants are able to obtain information, and to better participate in their local communities. Furthermore, their participation provides Japanese community members with added insight, and additional information that may have otherwise gone unnoticed. Language is an integral tool for two-way communication. In addition to Japanese, the national language, parallel channels of communication should be considered, as a means to allow residents to express their feelings and thoughts in their native language. This applies not only to adults, but also to the children of immigrants who have been brought to this country by their parents. In order to guarantee the “right to education (of everyone),” as stated in Article 26 Section 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is up to the adult members of the local community to address the need to remove the language barrier, so as to allow all children their right to education. Depending on the timing of their arrival to Japan, some children will go on to eventually regard Japanese as their first language. What is necessary is for schools to identify whether the child’s first language is Japanese or a foreign language, and in some cases, children may require an educational environment that allows them to receive instruction in more than one language, in contrast with adult language learners, for whom more straightforward foreign language education would suffice.

In terms of policy, inequality is inherent in the system, where limitations are placed on social services provided to foreign residents, even in cases where they have been paying taxes for multiple decades. For example, in 1999, regional

development vouchers, that were issued to aid “young adults raising children, pensioners receiving senior welfare pensions, and other low-income senior citizens,” with the aim of “increasing individual consumption to revitalize local economies,” were only made available to Japanese citizens, permanent residents, and special permanent residents (as defined in Article 4 Section 1 of the Alien Registration Act). This program excluded long-term residents who had been paying taxes for decades, in the same way as their Japanese counterparts, thereby denying access to these vouchers. Although the arguments for or against local election voting rights of foreign residents is outside of the scope of this treatise, there are many other examples of policy measures that breed inequality in everyday life.

The “empathic barrier” refers not only to the mechanism that leads to overt discrimination, such as housing discrimination and employment discrimination, but it also refers to latent prejudices held by Japanese people toward immigrants, as well as a consciousness among some who consider it “pointless to reason with foreigners.” In 2007, the Japanese Cabinet Office conducted a survey entitled “Public Opinion Poll on the Protection of Human Rights,” where section (8) dealt with the protection of foreigner human rights, which yielded results that shed some further light on this issue. In response to the question, “Should the human rights of non-Japanese citizens be protected in the same way as Japanese people?,” only 59.3% of respondents answered “yes.” In response to the question “Is it inevitable that non-Japanese citizens are not afforded the same rights as Japanese people?,” 25.1% of respondents answered “yes,” while 10.8% of respondents were “unsure.” In other words, close to 4 out of 10 people believe that there is no significant problem in neglecting the human rights of “foreigners.” Do foreigners need to have their human rights protected? The fact that such a large proportion of “well-meaning” citizens are unaware that their own views are discriminatory, and that they are quick to view the rights of such immigrants so lightly, it is the author’s opinion that this is indicative of the poor state of

human rights education in Japanese schools.

In this way, such residents with foreign backgrounds face language difficulties in an environment where the national language is Japanese, are provided with unequal access to services based on their nationality and status of residence, and on an “empathic level,” while such immigrants might not be faced with aggressive discrimination, the fact that such a large segment of the public holds latent views in which discrimination against foreigners is inevitable is indicative of the inequality they are faced with. In the face of such existing barriers, the pressing question becomes whether mutual assistance can truly be practiced in the event of a natural disaster.

3.3 Are Minorities at a Disadvantage During Times of Disaster?

A term often used is “people especially vulnerable during times of disaster.” According to Atsushi Tanaka (2007), this term was first used in the “Disaster Prevention White Paper” issued in 1986. In disaster-management at the local governmental level, the term “those requiring special assistance during time of disaster” is also used. As long as there are community members with diverse backgrounds, there will always exist people especially vulnerable to the effects of a disaster. In the Japanese Red Cross Society Guidelines for Measures to Accommodate Individuals Requiring Special Assistance During Times of Disaster, these individuals are defined as “those that require assistance in executing disaster-management actions, such as evacuating to a safe place, etc.” The guidelines specifically name the following groups:

- (1) People with mental and physical disabilities (the physically handicapped, mentally disabled, those with internal organ dysfunction or disorder, and the visually and hearing impaired)
- (2) Senior citizens with impaired cognitive or physical abilities
- (3) Infants and small children who may be unimpaired in normal situations,

yet exhibit limited comprehension and decision-making skills under duress

- (4) Foreigners with limited Japanese comprehension
- (5) Pregnant or injured individuals who exhibit temporary mobility impairments

Tourists who are not familiar with the lay of the land are also considered to be included in this definition. In a revised interpretation, the Basic Disaster-Management Plan issued by the Central Disaster-Management Conference in 2008 included senior citizens, people with disabilities, foreigners, infants and little children, and pregnant women in the definition of people requiring special assistance during times of disaster. Here, it must be noted that “foreigners” were interpreted to specifically refer to immigrants. Osamu Hiroi (1992) further classifies especially vulnerable individuals into two groups, namely, those with “mobility vulnerabilities,” and those with “information vulnerabilities.” “Mobility vulnerabilities” are evident in those who have physical limitations that affect their mobility, and “information vulnerabilities” affect people with visual and hearing impairments, as well as immigrants, for whom there are impediments in collecting and communicating information. These groups can be classified as so-called minority groups, in the greater sense. However, it is important to note that anyone can be placed in a situation where they would require special assistance. A specific example of this is a temporary injury, which can act as a “mobility vulnerability” for anyone.

The question arises, however, of whether these especially vulnerable people only exist to passively receive special assistance. For example, it is true that residents with physical limitations, require accommodations that differ from those provided to able-bodied residents, thus requiring individualized assistance. Similarly, people with limitations on the way they are able to collect information will require assistance or communication tools to help them send and receive

information. However, during times of a major disaster, it is required that all community members come together to assume roles and responsibilities within their own means, and to provide mutual assistance to one another. People who are especially vulnerable in times of disaster end up in that vulnerable position due to society's failure to address their precarious role in the community. We argue that steps can be taken, within everyday community life, to allow such community members to find their own individualized role, where they can assume active responsibilities within a community. Such members can especially prove to be an asset during the recovery phase of disaster-management. Local governments have tried to address this issue, by including evacuation assistance guidelines for individuals requiring special assistance during disaster, as part of their disaster-management plans. Furthermore, some local municipalities have made efforts to create maps to locate individuals needing special assistance. As it is clear that these individuals require support, due to the various handicaps that they have, these maps can prove useful in providing them with the support they need. Unfortunately, such efforts by local government stop short of identifying how such especially vulnerable residents can be utilized as an asset to contribute in some way to disaster-recovery efforts.

In community disaster risk management, the goal is to take steps to minimize the number of especially vulnerable residents, and to help these vulnerable residents to overcome their vulnerabilities, and utilize their talent to the fullest extent, thereby boosting their incentive to participate in community activities and increasing opportunities for their participation.

By fostering community disaster-management activities, we would be able to correct inequalities found in everyday life, thereby helping in the formation of a democratic society, where all community members have guaranteed protection of their human rights, allowing us to mature further as a society as a whole. Although it is impossible for us to prevent natural disasters and the hazards that stem from their occurrence, if we are able to reduce the vulnerability of

our communities, even incrementally, we can steadily minimize the amount of damage, and help spur the growth and development of our communities. Toward this end, the multilingualization of information is one strategy to help us move in this direction.

4. Natural Disaster as the Catalyst for the Multilingualization of Information

4.1 Lessons Learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake - The Importance of Community Autonomy

On January 17th, 1995, at 5:46 A.M., the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake occurred (registering a magnitude of 7.3), in what was, at the time, regarded as an unparalleled event. As it had been previously believed that the region was safe from earthquakes, a majority of the residents, being unprepared for such a disaster, were plunged into deep anxiety and despair, even being cut-off from their means of transportation and communication. It goes without saying that foreign residents, with limited Japanese language comprehension, were left in an even more precarious situation. This urban earthquake disaster, claiming the lives of 6,343 people, prompted members of Japanese society to come together to the disaster affected area, in order to aid in the tragic crisis. This active involvement of private citizens, caused many to regard 1995 as “the first year of the Volunteerism Era.” With societal attention also directed toward local disaster-affected residents of foreign origin, this event helped to bring the term “multicultural coexistence” into common parlance. As a result of a large multitude of people providing whatever assistance they could, without dwelling too much on the minor details, the disaster-affected citizenry and residents came to realize the importance of maintaining community autonomy at the local level. Community members came to the raw realization that “community building” that starts on an everyday basis, by fostering neighborly relationships in the local community were absolutely essential and potentially life-saving during times of

disaster related crisis. In Japan, when compared to other countries, the populace places a great amount of trust in the government, and thus, the citizenry relies on the rapid deployment of the Special Defense Forces to aid in such situations.

However, as the forces of nature are often incalculable, it takes significant amounts of time for the authorities to bring about order in such times of chaos, and it is up to community members to protect themselves from the many ensuing hazards that they face in such situations. Indeed, in disaster-affected communities such as those on Awaji Island, where such community building was already being practiced on a daily basis, relief efforts were much smoother. In some reports it was stated that the local residents were so well acquainted with each other that they knew not only the family structures of their neighbors' households, but through daily conversations they even learned, for example, which room a particular grandmother had been sleeping in that night, thereby enabling residents to rescue her from a devastated home without wasting excessive amounts of energy and effort. As a result, it was observed that fewer individuals in that locale were trapped underneath rubble for extended amounts of time. In the local community of the aforementioned radio station, residents were forced to reexamine "who they were", as a community, which now consisted of a Nikkei Latin American community that had grown rapidly after 1990, ethnic Koreans who had already been living in the community for many decades, and Vietnamese residents who had arrived as refugees after the Vietnam War, all of whom were community members that required assistance and the concern of their neighbors.

Individuals with prior personal connections and ties with foreign residents came together, prompting the start of numerous civic activities to help in the relief efforts. Vital disaster related information was translated into multiple languages by volunteers who were fluent in both Japanese and other languages, and a multilingual mini-radio station was launched along with consultation services provided in various languages.

During and after the disaster, community members, regardless of their country of origin or language that they spoke, reached out and supported each other as fellow victims of the disaster. Through this ordeal, community members came to realize, firsthand, how extremely diverse the community had become not only in terms of country of origin. This experience served to teach the local community not only of the importance of the self-reliance of local communities, but of how it is a life-or-death matter that we strive to break down the walls that divide our diverse community members, so that we can truly help each other in times of need. In addition to learning just how diverse our community was, we also witnessed how the opinions provided by minority community members gave us the insight necessary to identify community issues that the majority often fails to recognize.

The various relief activities that began in the midst of the chaos caused by the earthquake helped the local residents and volunteers to realize the importance of community autonomy, and through the subsequent process of disaster recovery to help rebuild the devastated community, the community was able to eventually transition to everyday activities to foster “multicultural community building.”

Next, we will examine the case of FMYY³, an NPO that continues to broadcast in 10 languages, and the Multilanguage Center FACIL⁴ (hereinafter referred to as FACIL), a community business that provides translating and interpreting services in 59 different languages, with some proceeds going to fund other civic activities.

4.2 Making Use of a Multilingual Network to Provide Continued Disaster Related Assistance

10 years after the occurrence of the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake, in October of 2004, the Niigata Prefecture Chūetsu earthquake struck Niigata prefecture with a magnitude of 6.8. In response to this crisis, individuals, who

had formed close bonds during their relief activities for the former earthquake, empathized with the plight of the disaster affected people and immediately took action. Relief efforts for foreign residents were also quick to materialize. At the Nagaoka International Exchange Center, multilingual information and notices were posted, and multilingual information was also provided in community radio broadcasts. The translation of information into several languages for the disaster-affected areas required a great deal of cooperation and effort, and members of the network formed during and after the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake took part in this effort. Such efforts involved text-based information being translated into various target languages and audio recorded in different languages, which was later made available at the Nagaoka International Exchange Center and broadcast as part of community radio programming. To aid in these efforts, FMYY recorded audio information for languages that volunteers in the disaster-affected areas were unable to handle on their own, while FACIL, along with other organizations leveraged the translating talent in its network to aid in the translating process. By enlisting the help of volunteers involved in producing multilingual radio shows at their station, multilingual audio data was produced and delivered to the disaster-affected areas via the Internet, thereby allowing the local community radio stations to broadcast such multilingual audio content. With that said, despite the fact that 10 years had passed since the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake, even though incremental efforts had been made to improve the system for disseminating information to disaster victims with limited Japanese language proficiency, the process essentially still relied on the work of volunteer networks.

In response to this situation, the Council of Local Authorities for International Relations⁵ (CLAIR) secured a budget and called upon FACIL, a grass roots civic organization, to translate roughly 120 standardized text announcements into 10 languages. These translations were to be shared as a common multilingual resource, which were used to produce informational signs, audio content, and

text data to be sent to mobile phones. These materials were combined in 2006 to form a Disaster Related Multilingual Information Creation Tool, and CLAIR distributed the tool to local governmental offices nationwide, as well as releasing it to the public by making it available on its website. CLAIR further requested that FACIL host informational sessions on how to use the tool at locations across the nation in order to raise awareness. The tool was further revised, and further languages were added, and as of 2018, the tool is made available as part of the “Manual for Launching and Operating a Disaster Related Multilingual Assistance Center” on CLAIR’s website. Although it had taken 10 years since the occurrence of the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake for it to be set into motion, a mechanism for multilingualization during times of disaster had finally taken off at the national level.

3 years after the aforementioned Niigata Prefecture Chūetsu earthquake, another earthquake (with a magnitude of 6.8), the Chūetsu offshore earthquake, struck the region in July of 2007. As the memories of the former earthquake were still fresh in mind, efforts to establish a network to aid in multilingualization were expedient. 2 days after the occurrence of the earthquake, multilingualization efforts were already being coordinated by the Kashiwazaki Area International Association, and by forming a network similar to the one formed during the Chūetsu earthquake, information was translated into 6 different languages. 2 days later, community radio station FM Pikkara began broadcasting multilingual content. FACIL was once again enlisted to provide support, with information being sent in each morning, and after being translated, the multilingual information would be sent back the same evening. This process continued for 10 straight days, with local organizations finally able to handle the translation process on their own. In this situation, FACIL was initially once again called upon to provide their efforts in a fully volunteer capacity. However, the Kashiwazaki Area International Association was eventually able to secure grant funding to provide translators with compensation for their efforts, allowing for such

multilingualization of disaster related information to finally receive recognition as a public service that deserves funding.

According to later comments made by the office manager of the Kashiwazaki Area International Association, although they had tried to make active use of the disaster related information multilingualization tool created in response to the Chūetsu earthquake, in reality, they experienced difficulties in immediately deploying it, which caused them to realize the importance of preparing for the usage of such tools on an everyday basis. Although the tool provides 120 types of standardized message patterns translated to a number of different languages, the information required to describe rapidly changing situations varies widely depending on the region, and it is important that users familiarize themselves with how to effectively use the tool on a routine basis. Additionally, there is also a need for users to enlist the help of human resources on their own to enable them to prepare additional translations for information that is specific to the local area of the user. This tool was originally designed as a template that would allow local communities to begin their own efforts toward multilingualization, and the tool was never meant to be an all-inclusive solution on its own. In the case of the Kashiwazaki Area International Association, although they were able to remember that the tool existed and were quick to make efforts to use it, there are municipalities that are not even aware of the existence of the tool, as well as others that are aware of the tool but do not regard it with much importance, thereby rendering it ineffective. Even with access to such a tool created through the efforts of public institutions, in the end, whether the tool will be used effectively or not will be dictated by the consciousness of the local residents that inhabit a particular community.

Several years later, on March 11th, 2011, the Great Tōhoku earthquake occurred. The disaster involved hazards caused by the combined occurrence of earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown disasters. The destruction caused by this disaster was several times greater than that of the Great Hanshin-Awaji

earthquake, which had been previously called unprecedented. The disaster-affected areas featured a foreign resident population of substantial size. News reports described how most of the foreigners, aided by the embassies of their home countries, quickly left for their homelands. Of course, it must be acknowledged that there were a significant number of foreigners, residing under the status of international students and technical interns, who were provided with flights to return to their home countries, as well as the spouses of Japanese nationals, who may have returned to their home countries with the best interest of their children's welfare in mind. Yet that still does not change the fact that a significant number of foreigners also chose to remain in the disaster affected areas, working together with other local residents to aid in the evacuation and relief efforts.

Immediately following the earthquake, FMYY began selectively broadcasting programming content, such as "cautionary notices on tsunami hazards," "warnings to avoid disinformation," "information on the disaster message phone service," "visa related information," "information on medical and multilingual consultation services," as well as "messages of encouragement." As the city of Kobe was also placed under a tsunami advisory, the radio station notified local residents of this situation. However, as the situation continued to rapidly change by the moment, in some instances, such pre-prepared multilingual information, such as that provided by the aforementioned tool, proved to be inadequate in describing the situation accurately. For such occasions, the organization had to resort to multilingualization of news reports provided by major media outlets, such as NHK on an as-needed basis.

Such audio data was made publicly available on FMYY's website, thereby allowing for individuals, as well as other radio stations to freely download and make use of this information. Furthermore, FMYY also actively contacted community radio stations by phone, with the aim of encouraging the usage of the multilingual audio information. Such phone calls also gave the radio

station an opportunity to not only check on the well-being of acquaintances and to share words of encouragement, but they also allowed FMYY to reach out and identify if there were any needs that could be met. Although some of the radio stations already had staff members that were able to create their own multilingual programming content, a majority of these stations made effective use of the “Disaster Related Multilingual Information Creation Tool” that had been developed together with CLAIR after the 2004 Niigata Prefecture Chūetsu earthquake, as well as the “Disaster Related Multilingual Audio Content Collection” developed together with the JICA Hyogo International Disaster-Management Training Center, in addition to other multilingual audio data that had been developed over the 16 years of the radio station’s activities. This experience acted as a stern reminder of the importance of developing such content and materials on a routine, everyday basis, in order to prepare for disasters like these. Additionally, in order to make use of such tools, as seen in the case of the Niigata Prefecture Chūetsu earthquake, it is imperative that routine efforts be made to ensure that the tools and materials are maintained in an organized manner, and that the actual usage of such tools is practiced during local disaster-management training sessions. In order for such tools to actually prove effective, a community environment must be fostered, where local residents realize the absolute necessity of the usage of such tools, so that a robust community network that has the capacity to transmit multilingual information in a timely manner can be established.

Other organizations also took part in these efforts, such as the National Conference of Multicultural Managers⁶ (a non-profit organization), which launched the “Tōhoku Region Pacific Coast Earthquake Multilingual Assistance Center” on the day following the earthquake. By establishing a nationwide network of supporters, the center was able to provide multilingual consultation services, and helped to coordinate the translation of vital disaster-related information into 6 languages, which was periodically posted to their website

until the end of April.

In the disaster-affected areas of Eastern Japan, once the initial phase of preparing and disseminating multilingual information had settled down, and the recovery and restoration efforts had gradually begun to take hold, FMYY and FACIL began coordinating with local organizations in order to focus on providing support in 3 areas, namely, “the continued support of efforts to provide multilingual information,” “supporting the self-driven production of community radio programming by local residents, and activities to support the operation of emergency disaster radio stations,” and “efforts to empower immigrant communities with the aim of making them self-reliant.” Such activities in these 3 interrelated areas closely match the very efforts that both organizations had been involved in throughout the years.

(1) Supporting Efforts to Provide Multilingual Information

In addition to the multilingual information provided in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, continued efforts were made to publicly share such translated text data and audio data on the Internet, in addition to distributing such data in the form of a CD-ROM. Once the “Tōhoku Region Pacific Coast Earthquake Multilingual Assistance Center” had ceased operations at the end of April, FACIL focused on disseminating information for Fukushima prefecture, where accurate information was hard to come by, and for which potential for the spreading of disinformation was particularly high. Toward this end, the organization provided translations of the Fukushima Disaster Volunteer Center’s “Heartful Fukushima” newsletter (a weekly periodical, which later became bi-weekly), in 5 different languages, namely, English, Korean, Chinese, Portuguese, and Tagalog. Additionally, articles that were deemed to be of general interest were selected and edited into scripts, which would then be read-aloud on the “Tagengo Info” radio show produced and broadcast by the organization. The recorded radio programming was then sent as audio data to the emergency

disaster FM stations located in the disaster-affected areas.

The content provided in such resources contained vital information for local residents not only for daily life, but also on how to get involved in the local community to work together toward the common goal of recovery. In addition to adopting the approach of creating spaces within the community that would allow for the participation of foreign residents with limited Japanese proficiency, efforts were also made to create more long-term opportunities for participation in community life, leading to reciprocal two-way communication, with groups contributing their opinions and efforts for the common good of the community. Additionally, such efforts to make multilingualization more visible and commonplace help local residents realize that there are other fellow community members in need of multilingual information. Similarly, residents also begin to understand the need to use simplified Japanese when preparing multilingual information.

(2) Supporting the Self-Driven Production of Community Radio Programming by Local Residents, and Activities to Support the Operation of Emergency Disaster Radio Stations

Among the various forms of media, radio is an outlet for media that is often overlooked, only to have its value reassessed during times of disaster. On an everyday basis, although usage of radios pales in comparison to that for televisions, in situations where there is no electrical power, radio becomes the only form of media that can allow users to receive information. During times of disaster, residents are interested not in information provided by the mass media, but rather, in information that directly impacts the residents' everyday lives, provided by embedded local entities, such as community radio stations. After the occurrence of the Great Tōhoku earthquake, a record number of disaster emergency radio stations (hereinafter referred to as disaster FM stations) have been established. Disaster FM stations are formed when organizations, such as local municipal governments apply for a broadcasting license, with the aim

of providing disaster-affected individuals with disaster related information, and are granted temporary approval by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

Reaching out to these stations, wherever possible, FMYY and FACIL identified needs related to broadcasting equipment, radio programming, and audio data, and provided support on an as-needed basis. As it was expected, such newly established radio stations lacked broadcasting equipment, let alone the experience to produce radio programming, as many of the radio stations were operated by local residents with no broadcasting experience. With the cooperation of individuals tied to the broadcasting industry and other non-profit organizations, efforts were made to secure broadcasting equipment and to provide training for the broadcasting staff members. The organization also conducted workshops to raise consciousness among broadcasting staff members on the importance of familiarizing themselves with the groups within their local community, the importance of multilingual broadcasting, and the importance of related activities to prevent the creation of divisions or outright exclusion of certain groups within the local community.

(3) Efforts to Empower Immigrant Communities with the Aim of Making Them Self-Reliant

FACIL, in cooperation with FMYY, also engaged in support of the Bayanihan International Friendship Association (hereinafter referred to as Bayanihan), a group that serves Filipina women married to Japanese men in Kesenuma city. Bayanihan is a group composed of Filipina women who attend a Catholic church in Kesenuma city. Most of the foreign residents living in Kesenuma hail from the Korean Peninsula, China, and the Philippines, and they reside in Japan under the statuses of technical internships, international students, or as spouses of Japanese citizens (international marriages). Most of the women who live with their Japanese spouses, use simplified Japanese in everyday life, and as “wives”

of local community members, they have deep familial and communal ties with the area. At home, such women learn how to prepare home-cooked meals from their mother-in-law, and such women speak Japanese to their children, as they assimilate to their family's unique customs and culture, similar to how Japanese wives adjust to living with in-law families.

Such women, who were living under such conditions when the large-scale earthquake occurred, were able to gain substantial information, as well as aid and assistance from family members and neighbors due to the deep connections they had developed with the local community in their daily life. Although this group was able to avoid much of the confusion that other groups experienced, during the recovery phase of relief activities, these women encounter many vocabulary words that they are unfamiliar with, and it can be said that they still require ongoing support. Additionally, in situations of uncertainty and instability, such as after the occurrence of a major disaster, the inability to receive information and express themselves in their native language proves to be stressful, and in their situation, where Japanese is the only means of communication, it is easy for such women to feel isolation and anxiety, making them more vulnerable to false rumors and disinformation.

In response to these needs, FACIL offered to support these women in producing radio programming in their native language of Tagalog. As these women had no experience in producing radio programming, the organization prepared the necessary production equipment, the know-how required to record and edit programming content, training on how to plan and structure programming content, and instruction on interviewing techniques, as part of a basic training program. The broadcasting equipment was provided by a separate organization, and grant funding for transportation expenses was provided, allowing the organization to help set-up the equipment in late June. The women continued to periodically gather to rehearse with one another, and by the end of July, they had recorded their first radio show, which was broadcast on FMYY.

This group would later go on to form two separate groups, and they continue to produce programming that is broadcasted at a disaster FM station⁷ in Kesenuma city. Although the majority of the programming is presented in Tagalog, the presenters also make an effort to incorporate Japanese, in order to connect with the local community. Some examples of the wide range of topics covered in their radio programs include, “firsthand testimonies on the horrors of the earthquake and tsunami, and the hardships faced in life after the disaster,” “pop-music hits from the Philippines,” “hardships faced in the evacuation center,” “information provided from government offices,” “lessons learned from experiencing a natural disaster,” “information on nursing assistant training,” “advice for everyday problems and issues,” “talking segments with guests from the Philippines,” and “sharing our activities with local community members.”

5. Multilingualization as a Means to Enable Minorities to Better Participate in Society

As mentioned before, a substantially large number of residents with foreign backgrounds reside in the area of Eastern Japan. As many of these individuals have become naturalized Japanese citizens, it is difficult to estimate their number just based on the population of registered foreign aliens, and their current purpose or status of residence varies widely, including technical internship, international student, spouse of a Japanese citizen, Nikkei descent, etc. Some individuals immediately left for their home country, as others evacuated to different regions of Japan with the help of relatives, while some stayed in the disaster-affected areas and had to spend time in evacuation shelters, showing just how diverse the response to the disaster was. The response of the wives married to Japanese men, many of whom live in Eastern Japan, was also varied. Many of the women, who had married into farming and fishing families in the Tōhoku area, tended to assimilate by “becoming more Japanese,” thus earning approval of the family and the local community. It is also said that many of these women abide by the

wishes of their mother-in-law, and exclusively use Japanese with their own children when taking care of them in the home.

With that said, the question remains whether this relationship requiring the wife to act Japanese in order to gain approval from those around her is actually based on trust. A relationship where one party is expected to adjust to the other, in such a one-sided manner, can hardly be called equal. This brings about more questions, such as whether it is fair that the mothers are not able to speak to their own child in their native language, and the fairness of the environment in which they are not able to share their disaster-related experiences in their native language, raising further questions as to whether Japan can truly be called a democratic society where human rights are protected.

Through the production of radio programming, the members of Bayanihan were able to take action, and to work together to further grow their abilities to communicate and to critically analyze information. By sharing information that was exclusive to the location in which they lived, with other speakers of their native tongue, living both within and without the country, they were able to forge connections, relieve emotional stress and anxiety, and engage in a process of healing that can only be achieved by expressing themselves in their native language. As the ultimate goal of the activity was not to create a radio program, in and of itself, the process of creating the program provided participants with a space in which they could exchange information. As these women spend most of their daily lives communicating in Japanese with their husband, children, and in-laws, opportunities to share things, such as their experiences during the disaster and to consult with each other in Tagalog help to provide emotional healing. Furthermore, the contents of the radio programs also raise awareness among Japanese residents, providing them with clues and ideas on how to improve community building efforts.

In response to these activities, certain local residents reacted negatively, as some of them remarked that there is no point in allowing such women married

into Japanese families to create their own group when they were already so well assimilated in the local community. While it may appear to these people that such human relationships, requiring one-sided effort by the women to adjust to Japanese culture, are running smoothly, in reality this kind of relationship becomes a burden on those giving forth the effort. In times of disaster and other kinds of crisis, the ill effects of this burden become visible, and in many cases end up destroying these relationships. Within the scope of the recovery efforts, in order to establish a network of participation that is inclusive and includes the involvement of foreign residents, it is necessary to gradually forge bonds and human relationships based on a spirit of generosity between these groups of residents. Furthermore, it is important to promote self-help and mutual-help activities for local residents with foreign backgrounds to gather with peers that share their language and culture, and to engage in affirmative action that empowers them, thereby allowing them to enter into a cooperative relationship with other local residents on an equal footing.

The aforementioned women were able to find their space and opportunity to participate in the community, and they would later go on to receive free nursing assistant training provided by the Japan Association for Refugees. As they prepared for the difficult test, the members encouraged and motivated each other, and as a result, 7 members of their group were able to receive level 2 certification and have started work as nursing assistants. These women, who had just recently lost their former jobs in the seafood processing industry, were able to find worthwhile employment, while discovering new talents that they now share with the rest of the local community.

From the standpoint of the 3 key aspects of community disaster-management mentioned earlier, namely, that of ownership, leadership, and incentive, the more immigrants are given opportunities to communicate with one another, the more active they become in engaging the local community, and this increased communication between immigrants can also lead to an increased sense of

ownership and leadership.

Although no one would wish that such a tragic natural disaster occur ever again, the events that followed, resulting in the foreign residents gradually establishing their own networks, could be interpreted as a first step toward creating an inclusive society in which residents, regardless of their backgrounds or place of origin are able to live together while retaining their identities, and at the same time using their talents and abilities to play an active part in their local community.

Drawing on the valuable observation made during the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake, on the importance of providing information to residents with limited Japanese proficiency within the scope of disseminating information to the local community, it can be observed that such efforts are now becoming more ingrained in society. Many local municipal organizations, such as international associations located in the disaster-affected areas are now able to expediently provide multilingual information and radio broadcasts. Over the 23 years that have passed, it can be said that awareness has improved somewhat, on such things as the diversity of disaster-affected communities, the importance of truly inclusive support systems that exclude no one, the potential of such systems in fostering increased mutual assistance, and the positive effects of such systems on the subsequent recovery phase of disaster-management.

6. Conclusion

In the lead up to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, it can be observed that awareness toward the multilingualization of information has significantly increased based on the various public policies related to in-bound tourism that are being promoted to welcome in a large number of tourists. In 2018, a year that was particularly fraught with disasters, the occurrence of the Hokkaido Eastern Iburi earthquake in September brought to the forefront the issue of the uneasiness felt by foreign tourists due to their lack of access to information during this ordeal, and through

“seminars regarding the dissemination of disaster related information” conducted by the Kinki Bureau of Telecommunications geared toward local municipalities, one particular theme that was identified was the issue of how to disseminate information to such foreigners.

With that said, on June 25th, 2011, the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake Recovery Planning Council released a report entitled, “Recommendations for Recovery - Finding Hope within the Tragedy,” which was written exclusively from the standpoint of the “national people.” The report contains references to “interpersonal connections and mutual assistance” in a section that starts off by mentioning that “even the smallest voices within the local community should be heeded, with the hope of revitalizing the region,” and further continues, “as part of the recovery process, through the realization of social inclusion, we can forge new human connections, thereby helping Japanese society as a whole to progress to its next stage of development.” Despite using such wording, it is unfortunate to note that the document does not include “immigrants” as potential participants in this process, leading one to question why the discussion on providing immigrants with spaces and opportunities of participation continues to go unaddressed. By promoting communication with immigrants who have lived in Japan over the long-term and even their descendants born on this soil, and through the inclusion of such members as part of a culture of providing mutual assistance during times of disaster, it is also possible to facilitate the dissemination of information to tourists who are temporarily staying in Japan. By approaching the issue from the perspective that immigrants can be instrumental in playing such a role, it is possible to go beyond simply viewing such individuals as helpless minorities that lack access to information, and to view them as a possible resource in the facilitation of mutual assistance.

At the time of writing, throughout the Western world, which has accepted a large number of immigrants over the years, there is a prevailing trend toward supporting public policy calling for the exclusion of immigrants and the rejec-

tion of immigration, based on opinions that view past immigration policies as a failure due to spreading acts of terrorism committed by actors, such as IS. With that said, however, when viewed over the broad course of human history, it cannot be ignored that each of these individual countries are indeed composed of residents that trace their heritages to a diverse array of sources. Even in the United States, in response to the public policies being promoted by President Trump, Michelle Obama, wife of the former President of the United States has stated that “immigrants are part of a proud tradition that has made us the greatest country on earth.”

Concepts, such as multiculturalism⁸ and intercultural cities⁹, which have spread throughout the world in conjunction with the phenomenon of the global movement of people find their origins in perspectives of diversity that originate from the awareness raised by the existence of such immigrants. Such perspectives directed toward minorities, who are susceptible to being marginalized, can be utilized to once again repair the divisions that have been engendered by these sentiments of exclusion that we have been witnessing thus far.

In Japan, where a heavy focus is placed on maintaining harmony, there is a tendency to exclude those that are different and to conform with the majority. While it must be recognized that there is an aspect in this line of thinking that can easily lead to public policies geared toward assimilation, once members have been included into this link of social connections, the capacity to fine tune multiculturalism within Japanese society is quite high. Therefore, it can be said that it is necessary to capitalize on this heavy focus on harmony in order to utilize “multilingualization” as a tool that can be used to “creatively innovate” and act as a “mechanism” to generate opportunities for inclusion into this network of social connections.

Amidst the backdrop of individualism, as seen in the West, respecting diversity at all costs has resulted in a potentially divisive situation, and the issue remains of how such societies will be able to achieve social integration.

The author contends that it is possible within the context of Japanese culture to establish a path toward social integration while maintaining respect toward diversity, a task that is often seen as difficult in the West.

With that said, within present day Japanese society, there have been successive incidents of people “losing their temper” over the slightest occurrences, and issues where people are being driven to pursue achievements based purely on economic indices in an ever-efficient manner, limiting such people to only establishing human relationships lacking in compassion and caring, as well as resulting in human isolation as seen in cases of so-called “isolated death.” At this rate, we risk heading toward the opposite direction of fostering a more tolerant and advanced society. When examining this current state, it is necessary to reflect on the positive qualities of Japanese culture that were held dear in the past. Within a culture that places great importance on harmony, it must be recognized that harmony is not “placing a lid over” the things that are different in order to conceal them and make them all look the same. Maintaining harmony while listening to all of the differing opinions and making fine adjustments is certainly not an easy task and requires great time and effort. With that said, however, this process to achieve harmony is at once a right that we should be afforded, as well as the means by which we can foster richness in society by creating new forms of awareness for its community members in order to act as the catalyst toward societal growth through which we can achieve a truly democratic society. Precisely for this reason, our perspectives toward immigrants, for which these differences are most pronounced, help us to also become more receptive to the perspectives of those minorities we cannot visibly identify. For such reasons, it can be said that “multilingualization” as a two-way communication tool can play a significant role in this process.

For such individuals within minority groups, who are prone to becoming marginalized within society, and that are in need of multilingual information, including both those who are permanent residents, as well as those who are stay-

ing temporarily as tourists, etc., the reality is that the needs of such individuals are inevitably given low priority by society at large. With that said, however, as we covered earlier, by broadening our perspectives towards such minorities, we can increase the number of community members willing to mutually aid each other, thereby better enabling us to establish stronger connections with the perspectives of all minorities.

Furthermore, in order to achieve this, it is imperative for us to maintain awareness on the role of multilingualization as a tool that is useful not only in times of disaster, but in everyday situations as well, and by bringing about everyday changes in the consciousness of the majority, this tool can help us strive toward building a society based on multicultural coexistence.

Notes

- 1 This research paper was translated by Masaki Hashimoto (Multilanguage Center FACIL, a nonprofit organization)
- 2 As it stands, there is still no international consensus on the definition of the term “migrant.” With that said, however, the definition that is most often cited can be found in the Report to the Secretary-General of the United Nations submitted to the United Nations (UN) Statistical Commission (in 1997), which states that it refers to “a person who moves to and resides in a country other than that of his or her usual residence for a period of at least 12 months (long-term migrant).” Based on this definition, it is possible to include long-term international students, workers on long-term assignments, and long-term tourists as “migrants” as well.
- 3 This radio station was established 1 year after the occurrence of the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake, with the merging of the mini-FM radio stations “FM Yoboseyo” and “FM Yêu Mên,” which were started with the intent of broadcasting earthquake disaster related information in multiple languages to an audience that included residents who could not understand Japanese. This station has since transitioned to an Internet broadcasting format, which began in April of 2016.
- 4 This organization was established as a community business that aims to solve social issues through the means of providing translation, interpretation, and multicultural planning services, and it is founded on its core of translation/interpretation volunteers that served to provide multilingual earthquake disaster related information to residents who could not understand Japanese during the time of the Great Hanshin-Awaji earthquake.
- 5 This is an extra-departmental organization of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of Japan, which was established to act as a core civic international exchange organization to

- promote inter-cultural interaction at the local level.
- 6 This was established as a conference for “multicultural coexistence managers” that have been certified through multicultural coexistence manager training programs conducted jointly by CLAIR and JIAM (Japan Intercultural Academy of Municipalities).
 - 7 As of June of 2017, this station is now known as Kesenuma community radio station “Gyotto FM.”
 - 8 The concept or related public policies where it is assumed that interactions between various groups should be conducted on an “equal footing” within societies where there exist groups with differing cultures.
 - 9 Novel urban planning policies that view the cultural diversity brought about by migrants and minorities as an advantage rather than a threat, and which treat them as a source of urban revitalization, innovation, creation, and growth.

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