

## **The Current State and Societal Impact of the Multilingualization of Various Forms of Media**

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### **1. Introduction**

As we currently live in a world where rapid technological advances are causing globalization to advance at an ever-increasing pace, it is absolutely imperative that we maintain an accurate understanding of the realities we face in modern day society. In such a rapidly changing world, where a wide array of information is transmitted via a broad spectrum of media, it can be said that there is great value in examining the issue of the multilingualization of such a massive amount of information, and how accessibility, or the lack thereof, of such information affects the very nature of the society that we live in.

Here, we will define “media”, as not merely a tool to serve as a means and an end in itself, but rather, we will make use of its broader definition, as an “intermediary”, and examine how it can be used to create opportunities for minority group members to take an active role in the transmission and sharing of information, in addition to examining the current state of multilingualization at the local level. The author hopes that the active use of such media will aid us in adapting to our rapidly changing community environments, by providing local community members with increased opportunities to critically analyze

information, and not be misled by unbalanced and inaccurate information that can sometimes be disseminated by the mass media, so as to better enable us to realize a more inclusive society where residents are never excluded from community life.

In order for such community media to play this role, it must be more than just an end in itself, and it must assume an active role in the community where it can gradually effect societal change, in terms of both influencing public policy and in raising public awareness and consciousness, thereby helping us grow and mature as a society as a whole. Moreover, it is imperative that we, as community members, share a common understanding as to the importance of using multilingualization as a means of achieving this goal.

## **2. Media as a Means to Connect Local Residents of Diverse**

### **Backgrounds**

– Multilingual Community Radio Station FMYY –

Community radio stations as recognized by the Japanese government, are defined here as one of form of radio broadcasting that focuses on serving a specific local municipality or local area within a given “governmentally designated city”. Compared to the standard FM radio stations, which broadcast across a wide geographic area or even across an entire prefecture, community radio stations have a limited broadcast range, but are permitted by broadcasting law to cover a larger area than “Mini FM” broadcasters that are generally geared toward broadcasting at small events or used for public announcement purposes at event venues. Due to the size and scope at which community broadcasting is conducted, some of its major characteristics that distinguish it from other forms of broadcasting are a “community-based” focus, emphasis on “civic participation”, and its use as a means to facilitate in disaster risk-reduction and as a means of communication in disaster situations.

FMYY was established during the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake, when

two “Mini FM” stations, FM Yoboseyo and FM Yumen merged to create a successor radio station. After receiving formal authorization to operate as a community radio station in 1996, FMYY found its home within the Takatori Kyuen Kichi (Takatori Relief Base<sup>1</sup>), located within the premises of the Takatori Catholic Church (it has since relocated to the Takatori Community Center in 2000).

FMYY resides in Nagata, Kobe City, an area that is home to a large “Zainichi” ethnic Korean community, and features a large number of artificial leather shoe factories, as well as a sizeable Vietnamese population who first arrived in Japan as refugees. The aforementioned Takatori Catholic Church, located in this area, also serves a large congregation of ethnic Korean and Vietnamese church members. Immediately after the earthquake and amidst the ensuing chaos, the Takatori Relief Base was formed, and volunteers came together to build lodging so that more volunteers could be brought in to aid in the relief activities. Eventually, the Disaster-affected Vietnamese Relief Liaison Council was formed, and its members worked together with the NGO Kobe Foreigners Relief Network, an organization that was housed in the Nakayamate Catholic Church<sup>2</sup>, located in Chuo-ward, Kobe.

In addition to the above, various other support activities geared toward assisting immigrant communities began to take shape. On January 30th, the South Korean Mindan West Kobe Office, also located in Nagata-ward, began radio broadcasts in Korean and Japanese. For many of these community members, it was impossible to forget the disinformation and fear-mongering that led to the mass genocide of ethnic Koreans that was perpetrated in the aftermath of the Great Kanto Earthquake (magnitude 7.9) that occurred on September 1st, 1923. To prevent such an atrocity from happening again, members of FM Salang, a “Mini FM” radio station in Ikuno-ward, Osaka, transported broadcasting equipment by motorcycle, and Korean teachers from the Mindan organization began radio broadcasts, to aid in the distribution of accurate information. Subsequently,

“Mini FM” radio station FM Yoboseyo members reached out to the Takatori Relief Base to ask if there was a need for Vietnamese language broadcasting as well.

Such outreach was received from members of FM Salang as well, and proposals were also made to the NGO Kobe Foreigners Relief Network. After consulting with the parties involved, it was decided that a number of volunteers would receive 2 days of training on radio broadcasting from the members of FM Salang, with the aim of starting radio broadcasts at the Takatori Relief Base. By the end of March, test broadcasts for FM Yumen began, featuring programming in English, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Japanese, and the radio station commenced formal operations on April 16th. On July 17th, half a year after the occurrence of the great earthquake, the aforementioned “Mini FM” stations merged to form FMYY. Broadcasting out of a makeshift shack, the station was a definitive example of “pirate broadcasting” at its finest.

Broadcasting without a license, with the approval of only the local community, in and around May of 1995, the radio station received a visit from staff members from the Kinki-area Bureau of Telecommunications<sup>3</sup>. A staff member commented, “we understand that the community is in need of such radio programming, in this time of disaster recovery, but we urge you to obtain approval, and we will assist you toward that end.” The author’s comments published in a newspaper summed up the station’s response thusly; as the station was composed only of volunteers with no experience in radio broadcasting work, setting up a stable structure with the capacity to operate an officially licensed radio station, indeed felt like “setting off across the Pacific Ocean on a raft.” Despite this, however, the station members performed the required duties, producing the voluminous amounts of paperwork necessary for the application, and as a result, on January 17th, 1996, on the day of the first annual memorial of the earthquake, the Bureau chief visited the station to personally hand-deliver the broadcasting license, thus marking the station’s official start as a licensed radio station. As

a shining symbol of grassroots disaster recovery and multicultural community building, FMYY began its community broadcasting efforts in earnest, filling the hearts of all of the residents and volunteers that had helped to start the station with much anticipation and emotion.

The station's programming in 1995 consisted of not only vital information for disaster victims (provided in Japanese and the aforementioned multiple languages), but also featured music from various countries and radio shows for individual languages. Furthermore, while some shows helped to share Japanese culture and teach about Japanese customs, other shows introduced listeners to the culture and customs of different countries, with compatriots from that country or people with some connection to the country acting as guests during the talking segments. At times, programming would include such things as Japanese-style comedy skits performed using foreign languages, as well as the broadcasting of more traditional ethnic folk music. From the standpoint, for example, of Vietnamese disaster victims living as evacuees in darkly-lit tent communities set in a local park, such programming served not only to provide them with vital information, but also served to reduce their feelings of anxiety and possibly even help to heal their psyches. At the time, the station members in charge of the Vietnamese language programming included "S", an individual who had arrived as a refugee and had become a priest in Japan, and "H", a former journalist who had originally come to Kobe to volunteer in the relief efforts, and had decided to further extend his stay in Kobe.

One morning, after broadcasting that community members were required to apply for a disaster affliction certificate, the station immediately received phone calls to the studio from Vietnamese speakers who asked, "we understand that we need to apply for a disaster affliction certificate, but where do we go, and how can we go about starting the process?" Station members would then accompany the resident to the local ward office and help them learn how to fill out and submit an application. As seen here, the ultimate goal was not just to

provide radio broadcasting in and of itself, but rather, to use radio broadcasting as one of many effective tools that could be used to mitigate unequal treatment of the local Vietnamese disaster victims.

Father “S”, who was in charge of broadcasting for a particular show, would often listen to re-broadcasts of his own show in his car, on his way home from taping a live show. He would later relate that, tears would stream down his face as he listened to the show on his car stereo. The Vietnam War had ended, when he was but 18 years old, and coming to the realization that the outlook for his life in Vietnam was quite bleak, he left his homeland on a boat in the darkness of night. Drifting across the ocean, as one of the many so called “boat people” refugees, he was fortunate enough to have been rescued and transported on a Japanese ship to a refugee holding facility. After receiving only 4 months of Japanese language training at a refugee settlement assistance center, the center introduced him to an employer. From there, he had gone on to improve his Japanese through hard work and dedication, and was accepted to a university where he was able to study theology. In 1995, the author recalls that this man was roughly 32 years old. It can be imagined that the 14 years he spent in Japan, were filled with great struggle and hard work, just to survive in his new home country. He recalled that he listened to his own words and the music of his homeland broadcast on public airwaves, and was brought to tears and overcome by an indescribable emotion, as he felt for the first time ever, that he had been accepted by the society of his newfound country of residence, and that he now had a place to belong to, in the town that he now called home.

These words, that beg the question of how each and every one of us, as members of a community, can find a place to truly call home, acted as the starting point for the author, of what now amounts to 20 years of work. In retrospect, it can be said that society has progressed in a palpable manner, through the small, unassuming efforts of a countless many. At the same time, it is clear to the author that some form of concrete methodology must be adopted, in order

to the pay attention to the many small voices of such community members, that are too often drowned out in larger society. One such observation made, during the author's many trial-and-error experiences in the field, is the usefulness of a metric, that we will refer to here as the "Wai Wai Factor". From the standpoint of local community building, there are numerous implications that can be drawn from this metric, that was developed over the years through what can only be described as a most arduous process.

As staff members of the radio station, the authors and founding members sought out staff members with increasingly high levels of specialized skills and eventually passed our duties on to them. Although the station is but a small, humble media broadcaster, as it is regarded as the country's first truly community-driven multilingual radio station, the station is frequently publicized by various mass-media outlets as a shining symbol of disaster relief volunteerism and multiculturalism. The station has been recognized for its activities, and has received numerous awards, making it quite visible among the many other non-governmental organizations and non-profit organizations working to serve in similar mission fields. There was even a time at which, the key members of the station made the nearly fatal mistake of losing sight of the station's original mission of ensuring "local community participation", and mistakenly assuming that the accolades and public attention were directed toward the station itself and not the community that it is based in. This rift, which began innocuously, among staff members who were working together with the best of intentions, even with the involvement of many minority stakeholders, gradually widened as the tales of the station's "creation myth", so to speak, became distorted and diluted over time. As this rift grew larger through the years, with little effort made to rectify the situation, the station's values shifted, leading to the station's eventual loss of the good faith of the local community and partner organizations. As a result of this, the station's sustainable operation was placed in jeopardy. The few station members that recognized the perilous nature of this situation,

had no choice but to start a long, arduous process of “righting the ship”, so to speak. Throughout this process, many of the well-intentioned stakeholders came together to carefully deliberate, and arrive at a solution, which ultimately required the station to replace a number of its key members, and reinstate some of its original founding members. Additionally, much of the programming was modified, and station members provided local community members and partner organizations with a formal apology and explanation of the situation. In 2003, the station was “reborn”, and started anew, and during the ensuing process, the station members developed a metric that is referred to as the “Wai Wai Factor”.

When advocating for the inclusion of minority viewpoints, it is absolutely imperative to not only provide minorities with support that eliminates inequality, but it is also vital to provide a space in which such minorities feel they can voice their opinion, in a frank and unfettered way, so that they can fully participate, as peers and equals, in the process of changing society for the better. It goes without saying that there will be difficulties caused by such things as differences of opinion, confusion, disagreement, as well the stress that comes with such interactions. However, it can be said that this entire process of overcoming such obstacles, to work together to draw up the means with which we can better the community, requires us as individual community stakeholders to critically examine such social issues from a perspective that goes beyond narrow, self-serving interests. Only then, is it possible for us to learn such things as a true generosity of the heart, enabling us to empathize with each other and mature as a whole community. The collective experiences amassed through the operation of FMYY over the years, differ greatly and are sometimes at complete odds with typical corporate ethics, such as productivity and profitability, but nevertheless provided community members with an invaluable opportunity to learn about civic and community ethics.

Making use of the “Wai Wai Factor” metric, the station’s radio programming was restructured, and as of 2015, there are a total of 40 radio shows broadcast-

ing in 10 different languages. In addition to multilingual radio shows that are primarily driven by residents of foreign origin, the station also features a regular series called the “School Broadcasting Club” show, a program that is produced on a rotating basis by numerous broadcasting clubs at local high schools in the community, a program called “Reaching Out, This and That, Curiosity – Eye to Eyes” that is produced by a visually impaired female host together with a number of members who work at a local sheltered workshop for people with disabilities, a program produced by a “Mini FM” station called FM Pipaushi in Nibutani, Hokkaido that focuses on Ainu culture, programs produced on a station-wide basis by “FMYY”, such as “Station Campaign – Protesting the Exclusion of Foreign Residents from Participation in Community Broadcasting”, “Passing On the Stories of the Great Earthquake”, among others. In such a way, the station places top priority on broadcasting programming that acts as an outlet for the “small” voices in the community that are often excluded from other forms of media. The radio programming time table exemplifies the diversity embodied by the residents of the local community. Furthermore, the community members who gather at the studio to record their programs are provided with a physical space in which they can connect with each other. One example is the FMYY program that airs every Thursday from 4PM called “Afternoon Nene,” a program that is produced by about 10 senior citizen members who are all 70 years or older. After each show is finished, the members open up a makeshift “bar counter space”, right downstairs from the studio, where delicious food and drink are offered, giving the members of the Takatori Community Center a comforting space in which to relax. In this space, all types of information are shared, and community members transcend such categories as race, ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, age, gender, and disability or lack thereof, to connect and interact with each other. A local resident who at one time boasted that he “hates Chinese people,” happened to have a change of heart and began showing affection toward a member in charge of Chinese programming sitting right next to him.

Radio stations can be used as a tool to provide information, but beyond that, they can also scale-up their activities so as to involve larger numbers of residents, thereby fulfilling their potential to become an effective means of community building. Often regarded as the father of community radio, Abraham Zen of the South African community radio station Bush Radio teaches that “community radio is 90% community activities and 10% broadcasting activities.”

Although radio is such an effective form of media during disaster situations, on an everyday basis, television is the more dominant medium, as most of the general public rarely listens to radio, with residents only tuning in when a disaster occurs. Due to this reality, it is difficult for radio to truly act as an effective tool in the immediate aftermath of a disaster, and it is important for us to consider how community radio can be effectively utilized, as differentiated from mass media broadcast radio, and to get community members to commit to using it as a useful tool on an everyday basis. In Japan, although there are specific licensing guidelines within the Radio Law of Japan for community radio, public policy is not well designed to facilitate community radio broadcasting, and it is necessary to learn from public policy practiced in other nations, and to advocate for policy changes that will help better develop this field of broadcasting. In order for FMYY to effect such change, it is imperative that the station reexamine the meaning of “community,” and to make effective use of the knowledge accumulated through its experiences as a radio station, and to continue to strive towards building an egalitarian society where no individual is excluded, and the right of the individual to access and participate in society is upheld. Furthermore, while it is undeniable that radio is the most effective communication medium that local communities can make use of during disaster situations, it is important to always be vigilant, as it too can be misused or exploited as a tool to exclude or divide communities.

Subsequently, at the end of March in 2016, FMYY returned their community radio broadcasting license to the government, and it transitioned to an Internet

broadcasting format. The reasons for this included the discovery of governmental regulations that prevented even a single foreign resident from sitting as a member of its executive board while also being involved in the station’s operations, as well as the amendment of the Broadcast Law and Radio Law in December of 2010, and the effects of the Great East Japan Earthquake, which occurred immediately before the laws came into force. Regarding the latter event, this resulted in a change in legal interpretation, whereby community broadcasting stations would now fall under the designation of “specified key broadcasting stations,” thus requiring them to comply with additional legal restrictions, as well as placing a heavy financial burden on them by requiring them to invest in equipment and facilities, and for a station such as FMYY that strives to build a community based on multicultural coexistence by allowing residents of diverse backgrounds to fully participate in such broadcasting activities, it became increasingly difficult for it to continue its operations in its previous incarnation.

2006.6.30

**FMわいわい新サービスの基準**

	YYD (わいわい度)	映像付きストリー ミング	画像付きストリー ミング	音声のみストリー ミング	オンデマンドスト リーミング	ポッドキャストイ ング
1 在住外国人が発信主体となる番組（とくに長田・神戸）	A	無料	無料	無料	基本的に無料	基本的に無料
2 オンラインが発信主体となる番組（とくに長田・神戸）	A	無料	無料	無料	基本的に無料	基本的に無料
3 外国語およびやさしい日本語による情報提供番組	A	無料	無料	無料	基本的に無料	基本的に無料
4 人権擁護を目的とした番組	A	無料	無料	無料	基本的に無料	基本的に無料
5 文化の多様性（＝多文化）を伝えていく番組	A	無料	無料	無料	基本的に無料	基本的に無料
6 日頃から活発に協働しているNPO/NGOが発信主体となる番組	B	基本的に無料	基本的に無料	無料	有料	無料の場合も
7 地域コミュニティづくりに資する番組	B	基本的に無料	基本的に無料	無料	有料	無料の場合も
8 長田・神戸の青少年の育成に資する番組	B	基本的に無料	基本的に無料	無料	有料	無料の場合も
9 長田・神戸の情報・文化を発信していく番組	B	基本的に無料	基本的に無料	無料	有料	無料の場合も
10 NPO/NGOが発信主体となる番組	C	有料	有料	無料	有料	有料
11 音楽の魅力を伝えていく番組	C	不可	有料	無料	不可	有料
12 行政が発信主体となる番組	D	有料	有料	無料	有料	有料
13 企業が発信主体となる番組	D	有料	有料	無料	有料	有料
14 コマーシャルを目的とした番組	D	有料/不可	有料	有料の場合も	有料	有料

YYD（わいわい度）とは、FMわいわい設立の経緯から以下のように規定しております。	
A	YYのリソースを積極的に投入して変える 放送枠を最優先に提供する
B	可能な場合に限るYYのリソースを提供する 担い手の余力があれば放送料金をいただく
C	放送料金が発生することを基本にするが、ケースバイケースでの判断もある 団体のリソースは投入しない
D	放送料金が発生する番組

Against the backdrop of the continued evolution of information technology, the station adopted Internet broadcasting as its means of transmission, and it continues serving the local community as a much-needed medium, which allows the residents themselves to continue in their broadcasting efforts in a more sustainable manner. More details on this sequence of events are provided in Junichi Hibino's "Transcending Our Insistent Focus on the Channels Used for Transmission<sup>4</sup>."

### **3. Media that Uses Information to Connect Foreign Language Speakers with Local Government Bodies and the Greater Community**

– Multilanguage Center FACIL – Translation and Interpreting Coordination Services as a Community Business –

FACIL was formed in 1999, consisting mainly of a group of volunteers who had come together to help provide information to local residents for whom Japanese language proficiency was limited, thus rendering them disadvantaged when it came to access to information. At its outset, it was formed as an organization launched using capital provided by Hyogo Prefecture's Disaster-affected Community Business Start-up Support Fund. As of writing, the organization currently shares the same office space as FMYY. Community businesses refer to local community-driven organizations that use business practices to solve local social issues. In recent years, the terms social enterprise and social business have entered into the public consciousness, and this form of business now enjoys nationwide exposure. The organization's mission consists of the following: (1) to set forth proper standards for translation and interpreting work, especially in fields for which such standards are loosely defined, with the aim of creating a stable infrastructure that can meet the needs of local communities, and additionally to build the community's translating and interpreting capacity while expanding job opportunities, (2) to contribute to the self-help and empowerment activities of foreign residents living in Japan, (3) to advocate for and

make recommendations for multilingualization and multiculturalization policy measures. To fulfill this mission, the organization acts to coordinate multilingual/multicultural community stakeholders, and caters to the needs of local residents, civic groups, local government, community groups, and private companies, by providing interpretation and translation services for 60 different languages, in addition to providing web design and desktop publishing production and planning services, and organizing events and seminars related to multiculturalism. After 20 years of operation, the organization has grown to support a network of approximately 1,200 registered translators and interpreters, with roughly 10 office staff members. Additionally, some registered members also provide their culinary and musical talents at various events.

In founding FACIL, the author draws on two specific experiences from her past. At one time, the author had worked as a staff member at the Argentine Consulate General in Kobe, and moved on to work at the Bolivian Consulate General in Kobe in 1990. That year, partial amendments made to the Immigration Control Law were placed in effect, allowing for the subsequent influx of immigration and long-term residence of Nikkei (Japanese ancestry) individuals and their families in Japan. At the time, there was a large shortage of manpower in Japanese factories and other workplaces, and on the surface, although the authorities provided an official explanation that the immigrants were being accepted into the country on the basis of their Japanese lineage, the actual motivation was to address the aforementioned shortage by bringing in foreign laborers. With that said, Japanese society had not prepared the necessary system of social services capable of accommodating the needs of such immigrants, as their first language was Spanish or Portuguese, despite their Japanese ancestry, causing much confusion resulting from cultural and customary differences in such situations as daily life and in the workplace. As the author was able to communicate in Spanish and worked at the aforementioned consulate, she was inundated with requests from immigrant residents, as they would contact and

visit her on a non-stop basis.

One type of request she received was for the translation of documents. At the time, Nikkei immigrants entered the country on a temporary visa, and would apply to change their status to a long-term resident, by submitting necessary documentation, such as their birth certificate or marriage certificate, that proves their Japanese ancestry or relations. As such documents were inevitably written in Spanish, it was necessary to attach a Japanese translation of the documents in question. Typical translation companies charged roughly 10,000 yen for one page of translated text, and as it was not a rare occurrence for families to have upwards of 10 pages or more of documentation, countless numbers of families came to the author to seek her advice.

Out of courtesy, the author started off by offering free translation services, but as word of mouth spread, the author was inundated with more translation requests than she could handle on her own. In order to make the situation more manageable, the author offered to request her friend to translate the documents, for a rate of 2,000 yen per page, to which the families, filled with feelings of gratitude still agreed to pay, resulting in yet further increases in the number of requests. Through such experiences the author was able to learn that, although there was great demand in society for such services, the low profitability of such work kept it from growing beyond a niche industry.

Moreover, although public awareness had risen after the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake on the need to make public information that had previously only been provided in Japanese, accessible to residents for whom Japanese comprehension is difficult, such translation work was still viewed as mere volunteer work, making such social services unsustainable. The author felt that it would be meaningful to develop this niche industry, by setting a monetary value on such translation work, with the ultimate aim of promoting multilingualization throughout Japanese society. Through these two experiences, the author felt that it was her duty to contribute to the multilingualization of information provided

by the local government and local community information, by establishing a community business, prompting her to found FACIL.

At the time of its establishment, although it offered translation rates set to 80% of the market value, it was quite difficult to convince public organizations to pay non-profit civic organizations a monetary fee for such services. Due to this reality, at times, it was necessary to provide services at price levels that were low enough that it could be considered volunteer work rather than a service, however, the organization persevered and focused on building up a solid reputation and track record. Although translation fees were set at a low level, the organization made efforts to lower overhead expenses for its office operations, and worked to retain a highly talented pool of translators by offering them with translation rates that were set higher than that offered by existing translation companies. Talented translators, in the organization's view, were not only to have high levels of language skill, but were expected to share a sense of purpose and duty of making information more widely accessible, and also shared an understanding that, at times, they would be called upon to provide their talents for volunteer projects. A majority of the translators, being minority community members, and having shared many of the same experiences, take great pride in their work, and also happen to be heavily involved in the author's community building activities. With that said, there was even an incident of the organization receiving an angry, combative phone call from an existing translation company, accusing the organization of engaging in a "price war" with companies offering translation services.

The work requested of the organization widely varied in nature, as the translation requests were being made by individual community members, and included a wide variety of things such as translation of official forms and documentation, as described previously, personal mail correspondence, essays, copywriting for small businesses, interpretation services for a non-Japanese spouse and her family, for example. One notable feature of FACIL can be seen in how it offers

translation at a highly discounted rate of 30% of the market price, for such requests as the translation of specific forms and documentation that are required by government offices such as that required for an individual to apply for a visa in order to continue staying in Japan, making it easier for individuals to place requests. Furthermore, the organization also provides a discounted rate of 50% of market level interpreting fees for such requests involving on-site interpretation at school and at counseling meetings, regarding children from foreign countries and their education. The translators involved are also expected to share an understanding of the organization's unique policies.

By and large, a majority of the requests involve various types of information provided by government offices. These include such things as information on nursing-care insurance and other forms of insurance systems, information necessary for daily life in Japan, such as how to properly dispose of garbage, and guides or guidebooks issued by local authorities and governmental bodies, with a priority placed on translation into the foreign languages most frequently spoken by foreign residents in that particular locale. Most recently, the organization received translation requests for information explaining major revisions made to provisions regarding foreigner residency law. Another significant project received from the Kobe International Center for Cooperation and Communication required FACIL to make use of its information and prior know-how, in drafting a disaster-risk reduction card, from the initial planning phase of the card to final completion. The organization also receives regular requests for translation of periodicals, such as newsletters. Additionally, the organization also receives requests for translating and interpreting services from universities and non-profit organizations geared toward such things as international forums and events, as well as multilingualization of website content introducing the activities of such organizations. The organization also receives requests for highly specialized types of translation involving such things as advertisements for company products and presentation materials intended for consumption by

overseas osteopathic clinicians among other requests.

What started as a community business that uses multilingualization to expand access for local community residents with limited Japanese comprehension, who are often left “out of the loop” when it comes to obtaining vital information, evolved to further provide job opportunities for minority community members, who had been previously underutilized despite possessing translation skills.

Although profitability was low, as society began to realize the importance of such services, the amount of work requested increased in a proportional manner. By creating a stable market for such work, it became possible for the organization to attain a sustainable means of revenue with which to perform its operations. Through such efforts, the organization was able to contribute in expanding the market for such services, and to make a case for the necessity of multilingualization in wider Japanese society, not just as a form of volunteerism and gratuitous assistance. Unfortunately, as the market for such translation matured, existing translation companies also began entering this field, leading to a price competition, which in some cases has led to government offices giving work to the “lowest bidder”, while ignoring things such as quality of translated content. As a result, there has been a significant increase in the amount of poor-quality translation in this field, which can be said to be a waste of taxpayer money. For this reason, it can be said that there is a need to fundamentally reexamine the current bidding system used by public institutions in Japan.

As increasing numbers of for-profit companies have entered the aforementioned market that the organization had originally developed, the reality is that it has become difficult to maintain a balance between the organization’s original mission of providing quality translation work at sustainable price levels. For the organization, it is now vital to maintain a flexible balance between the two, and new action may need to be taken to maintain this balance. When considering that social activism at its essence, is truly an unending process, the process itself rather than the end result is of utmost importance. Social movements operate

within a trajectory that frequently vacillates between progression and regression, and it is important not to lose focus of the movement's original direction, and make incremental steps toward achieving a goal.

20 years after the establishment of this organization, awareness within the local and national levels of government, on the importance of the multilingualization of vital information has indeed seen progress. For example, during the so-called "swine flu" H1N1 national pandemic in 2009, almost all prefectural websites nationwide featured information related to this crisis in multiple languages. At the same time, it must be acknowledged that it is impossible to convert all such information into multiple languages, and that multilingualization is still limited to the major languages of foreign language speakers in Japan. As such, there is still much work that needs to be done, but at the very least, it can be said that sensitivity toward the needs of non-Japanese speaking residents among local governmental bodies has most certainly increased.

Furthermore, FACIL is also involved in business activities which extend beyond the aforementioned areas of translation. Starting in 2003, the organization had begun developing a system for medical interpretation. Through such activities made possible by grant project funding, the organization aims to build a system that is as of yet unprecedented in Japan, whereby interpreters are dispatched to healthcare institutions, in a manner that is sustainable and scalable.

At its outset the project initially began as a number of surveys aiming to assess the needs of foreign residents with limited Japanese proficiency and of the current situation in local healthcare institutions. By interviewing individuals involved in similar, cutting-edge medical interpretation programs in Kanagawa prefecture and Izumi-Otsu City in Osaka prefecture, the organization was able to commence a pilot business project in 2005, with the support of medical institutions within the city of Kobe. Among the parties involved, awareness was already high on the issues that arise when medical patients don't fully understand information they are being given, and conversely when staff at medical

institutions aren't able to adequately communicate with their patients. For this reason, it is already understood that medical interpretation is something that is an absolute necessity.

However, the reality is that medical institutions are still unsure of who should shoulder the cost of such medical interpretation, and are still reluctant to wholeheartedly accept patients with limited Japanese proficiency, due to things such as the increased time required to treat such patients, as well as to minimize risk caused by liability issues arising from medical malpractice that may occur due to the language barrier. Considering that medical institutions are bound by principle to provide medical care to all patients, regardless of their background, it is self-evident that the current situation flies in the face of these values, and it can be said that the stance of these institutions is contradictory, as the risk of medical malpractice greatly increases under the current system where medical interpretation is not provided for all patients.

The stance of such medical institutions, as evidenced in their claims that, spending increased time on non-Japanese speaking patients is special treatment that is unfair to other patients, is a dangerous position to take, and could likewise be used as justification to deny adequate healthcare to patients that may require more time than typical patients, such as senior citizens or patients with disabilities. Furthermore, such comments are likely more of a result of underlying prejudice against foreign residents, such that foreign nationals are still not fully accepted as full-fledged residents here in Japan.

The right to receive adequate healthcare services should be made equal, and providing a one-size-fits-all approach and means to providing healthcare does not achieve this goal. The point of contention here is that the end result of any such approaches and means, must ultimately result in equal access to healthcare for all, and unless medical institutions can distinguish between the two, this inequality of access cannot be corrected. Nationwide across Japan, awareness on the need for a system to provide medical interpretation is growing year by year,

and national networks, such as the National Medical Interpretation Association are expanding their efforts to effect change. With that said, however, the medical institutions themselves have made the least amount of progress when it comes to this issue.

Faced with such realities, FACIL has focused on developing approaches to raise awareness of this issue within medical institutions. What began as a pilot business project evolved into a system whereby FACIL uses grant project funding to act as a coordinator to dispatch medical interpreters to medical institutions and other cooperating hospitals and institutions to assist patients who are in need of interpretation services, and providing the interpreters with the necessary interpreting and transportation fees. The cooperating hospitals and institutions include 3 general hospitals with ties to the Hyogo prefectural and Kobe municipal governments, that also indicated an interest in enlisting the support of medical interpreters, and the organization has also dispatched interpreters to hospitals aside from the ones listed above, as needed. Additionally, the results of questionnaires and interviews conducted as part of this project were compiled as a formal report, and the results were shared publicly with the general public through a series of seminars. As such reports are rarely read by people with very low interest in such issues, the organization also created an easy to understand handbook, complete with illustrations, entitled “What if a Foreign Patient Comes to Your Hospital?”, and the handbook was distributed to cooperating organizations nationwide. In 2011, the organization also produced a video entitled “It would be nice if we had an interpreter at the hospital – From the viewpoint of two Vietnamese middle school students living in Kobe City”.

In 2011, 8 years since it began its efforts, the organization was able to convince the Kobe municipal government to take a central role, and enter into a full-fledged partnership to launch a new pilot business project, based on the author and related members’ original medical interpretation system, with the cooperation of municipal medical institutions in Kobe. Furthermore, in 2013,

the organization was able to receive a commissioned project from the Hyogo prefectural government, to conduct a survey and promotional activities to raise awareness on this issue, supported through funding provided as part of the national government's "Emergency Jobs Creation Policy". As a result, for the fiscal year of 2018, the number of languages the organization supports has expanded to include more than 10 languages, and the number of cooperating hospitals has increased to 10, helping to make this issue more visible and the need for medical interpretation more self-evident.

With that said, however, as FACIL staff members are required to perform their coordination duties on a completely volunteer basis, it cannot be said that the system is self-sustaining as of yet. For this reason, the problem still remains of how to make this system sustainable and how it can be scaled out for usage by coordinating entities other than FACIL.

Indeed, the annual number of cases received for interpretation requests has increased to nearly 1,000 cases in 2016, and since the sheer number of cases cannot be handled on-site by accompanying interpreters, efforts have commenced to offer remote interpretation services in collaboration with private businesses that provides the organization with their expertise. With that said, however, the medical institutions involved are still hesitant to actively make use of such services, as their staff are not accustomed to using tablets devices, etc.

Promoting the multilingualization of information, does not only serve to raise awareness among local residents of the needs of their foreign resident neighbors. FACIL's most pivotal role is to provide job opportunities for native language speaker of foreign languages, who until then had often been excluded from community spaces and denied opportunities to participate in community life, thereby helping to empower such individuals and to advance their equal participation in society. The work requested of the organization is not just multilingual translation and interpretation, but spans a wide range of services, including multilingual web design, the production of audio materials, the design

of multilingual printed materials, and continues to expand to other service areas. Revenue earned through such services has further helped to act as a source of funding for FMYY's operations, and has also helped to fund support activities geared toward children and youth with foreign roots and ancestry.

Furthermore, in 2019, the organization received the Local Revitalization Grand Prize<sup>5</sup> among other such distinctions, and it can be said that the organization has been able to earn a significant degree of recognition as to the impact that the organization's efforts have had on the local community.

#### **4. Fostering Social Interaction and the Active Social Participation of Local Immigrants through Dissemination of Media Geared toward the Local Community**

– The Immigrant Community-driven “Hyogo Latin Community” and the Monthly Informational Newsletter “Latin-a” –

After the partial amendments made to the Immigration Control Law in 1990, a large wave of Nikkei Latin Americans immigrated to Japan. As indicated by the term “dekasegi” (meaning “migrant laborer”), although the reforms ostensibly allowed for people with up to 3rd generation Nikkei ancestry, or the spouses and children of such individuals to apply for long term residence in Japan, it is self-evident that the underlying goal of the reform was to simply address a shortage of unskilled labor. 29 years have passed since that time, and although the majority of the Nikkei Latin American immigrants were expected to return to their country of origin after 2 or 3 years, for the large part, many of them have effectively chosen to stay as long-term residents, with some exceptions. As of writing, there are roughly 210,000 Brazilians and approximately 80,000 residents with Spanish-speaking Latin American nationality, from countries such as Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, to name a few. While the Lehman Brothers scandal and the ensuing economic downturn caused a reduction in this number due to a large number of Nikkei residents returning to their countries of origin, as part of the

Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare's repatriation scheme targeting unemployed Nikkei immigrants, their numbers are still quite significant, especially when one includes Nikkei immigrants who have become naturalized Japanese citizens. While these Nikkei immigrants are often grouped into a single category, the sudden influx of such a large number of Nikkei Latin American immigrants with differing languages, cultures, and customs, placed local communities in a state of disarray, due in part to the lack of a proper social system equipped to accept these immigrants into society.

In the town of Oizumi in Gunma prefecture, the local government launched a nationally unprecedented program, aiming to reduce the increasing number of undocumented workers from countries such as Bangladesh and Pakistan, and replace them with legally hired Nikkei immigrants. Shoichi Mashita, the town mayor at the time, made a proposal to establish the Tomou Region Employment Stabilization Alliance, an organization funded using grant funding provided by the town government, and various town stakeholders took the initiative to set up a social system to accept foreign immigrant workers into the local community. For such policy making, it is quite common for authorities to take the ostensibly expedient route of making use of intermediary employment brokers and agencies, due to issues of limited language proficiency and lack of information on the part of the immigrant workers. However, what is notable in this case is that the local government chose to forgo the usage of brokers and staffing agencies, due to the intermediary fees extracted by such companies leading to poorer working conditions, and chose to adopt a more humane, "direct hire" means of hiring the immigrants. To facilitate in the hiring process, the local government sent multiple teams of observers to Brazil, and received the support of the local association for Nikkei people with Gunma prefectural ancestry, as well as the Japan Brazil Aid Association, who in turn helped to start a "word of mouth" campaign to find eligible workers.

To further ensure the stability of the social infrastructure to accept the

immigrants, the local authorities worked with private companies, to establish a system of social benefits that aimed to help improve the living conditions of the immigrants. In an article by the Jomou Newspaper in 1997, Kazuo Takano, former mayor Mashita's successor, was quoted as saying that "at the core of our approach was the mindset that we should ensure from the start that the Nikkei workers are not discriminated against, and that they are respected as human beings." The alliance also took other measures to address various areas of needs, such as hiring Nikkei Brazilian Portuguese speakers to act as counseling staff capable of handling requests from the immigrants, and to provide ongoing support to ensure that the Nikkei immigrants could maintain an adequate standard of living. As a result, the local population of Brazilian nationals, which numbered only 267 in 1987, exceeded 4,000 in 1996 (roughly 10% of the town's population), and in 2006, 6,676 of the town's total population of 42,165 (16%) were of Nikkei Latin American descent, underscoring how popular the town became as a place of residence for Nikkei immigrants. At the outset, a survey of local residents indicated that 67% were in favor of accepting immigrants into the community to perform unskilled labor.

However, while many of the aforementioned measures were taken on a public policy level to ensure humane treatment of the immigrant workers, what was not understood at the outset was that these local residents only saw the Nikkei immigrants as a means to eliminate the Pakistani and Bangladeshi undocumented workers, and that the local residents still only viewed the immigrants as a source of supplementary, legal "manpower". Although the Oizumi government adopted policies that readily accepted Nikkei immigrants as laborers, the local government had not taken the adequate steps to build a consensus among the local residents to engender the understanding of accepting these Brazilians as neighbors and not just immigrant workers. As this issue remained unaddressed, and more and more Nikkei immigrants came to settle in the area as "human beings" together with their "families", various difficulties arose, not just in the

workplace, but in everyday life, exacerbated by the differences in societal rules and customs, and the system alone proved to be insufficient in maintaining order. As the immigrants shifted from short-term to more long-term residency, and began to settle with their families, it became apparent that support was necessary not just in the workplace, but also in areas like everyday life and in school classrooms.

Since the long-time local residents were unable to predict such an outcome, anxiety caused by differences in language, culture, and customs, began to spread among them. Due to the town of Oizumi's lack of a proper social system to accept immigrant residents, the immigrants began to live in clustered communities, which bore an eerie resemblance to the "Nikkei Colonia" that the Nikkei immigrants' ancestors had once lived in upon first arriving in Latin America, and even worse yet, one could even draw parallels with the ghetto communities of Germany. The perceived convenience of homogeneity led the local community to cast off the immigrants into a sub-community that was cut off from the greater local community, and few opportunities were provided for the two communities to interact with each other. As this divide grew deeper, misunderstandings between the groups of residents led to the occurrence of various disputes and the deepening of prejudices, to the point where long-time local residents began to even resent successful Nikkei businesses located within the sub-community.

Added to the above, as Japanese economic conditions worsened in 1996 and beyond, and the town continued with the aforementioned system installed by former mayor Mashita, which was continued by mayor Takano, one local government staff member remarked that, "the more and more foreigners create their own isolated communities, the more they become distant from the Japanese. At this rate, I feel that all it will take is one incident for this anti-Nikkei Brazilian sentiment in the community to explode. I pray that it doesn't happen but it seems that the local sentiment on the acceptance of foreign immigrants has changed." Such comments revealed how there was now growing opposition to accepting

any further immigration among the local residents. The Section Chief of the Oizumi International Policy Section Chief commented that “although we were successful in this program in accepting the first 2,000 Brazilians, it seems that if we exceed that number, although we have not had the occurrence of any public incidents, we have already observed some antagonism between residents, and we wish not to further provoke the residents over issues on the Brazilians,” in the same Jomo Newspaper, in stark contrast with the previous comments given in 1997.

There were also similar cases in other locales where highly concentrated foreigner communities were established, leading to similar results of chaos and tension caused by a lack of special consideration and planning on the part of local governments, as seen in the case of the town of Oizumi. To address this problem, starting in 2001, heads of local government for such municipalities began conducting an annual Meeting for Municipalities with Highly Concentrated Foreign Resident Populations, where they would gather once a year in Hamamatsu. The meeting was established with the stated goal of “encouraging the sharing of information between municipal governments and local organizations such as international associations, located in areas where so called “newcomer” immigrants, represented by such groups as Nikkei Latin Americans live in high concentration, to identify best practices from a policy making and implementation standpoint, and to work together to proactively solve issues that are becoming more and more apparent,” and the meetings continue to this day with the aim of finding common ground.

What began as a meeting of 13 municipalities, has increased to 26 member municipalities<sup>6</sup> (as of 2015), with the Iida City Gender Equality Section, Multicultural Coexistence Office performing the meeting’s secretarial functions, and the meeting has resulted in a number of policy proposals directed toward national government officials. For example, in the fiscal year of 2005, a specific focus was placed on the most critical issue of “children”, and for a 2-year span,

Yokkaichi City took a leadership role in the meeting, setting the meeting's theme to be focused on activities "for the welfare of our children, who are entrusted with our future." In November 11th, the "Meeting for Municipalities with Highly Concentrated Foreign Resident Populations Yokkaichi 2015" was held, with many foreign residents and NPO representatives taking part in its organization. In November, meeting representatives submitted a "Request for Regulation Reforms" based on the previous Toyota City Declaration, and were able to receive an official response addressing the various requests made from ministerial representatives of the national government.

In this way, while the arrival of the Nikkei Latin American immigrants caused initial confusion and disruption at the local community level, it was also instrumental in creating new movements on a national level. Included in this process, is the occurrence of the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake, and such events helped to form and expand grassroots connections between civic activists, who in turn took on the societal issues that had long been concealed within greater society.

Based in the same facilities as the Takatori Community Center, FMYJ and Multilanguage Center FACIL have for many years worked very closely with the local Nikkei Latin American community, due in part to the author's close ties with many Nikkei Latin Americans that she maintained since before the occurrence of the earthquake. More specifically, in 1999 the organization helped give birth to the Comunidade Brasileira de Kansai (referred to hereinafter as the Kansai Brazilian Community), as a civic organization where Nikkei Brazilians play a central role in forming their own "foreigner community" organization. In 2003, with the aim of becoming a self-sustained, independent organization, it moved its base of operations to the Kobe Center for Overseas Migration and Cultural Interaction (formerly known as the Kobe Emigration Center), achieved the status of specified non-profit organization, and continues its operations to this day. Further information on this organization can be found in the author's previous publication entitled "Multicultural Symbiotic Society and the Power of the

Foreign Community: Do self-help groups that avoid ghettoization really exist?” (2008, Gendaijinbun-sha Co., Ltd.). Here, we will focus on examining another organization that found its beginnings within the same organization, called the Hyogo Latin Community. The organization acts as a foreigner community group that is driven by the local South American Spanish-speaking community, and here we will examine its background and process of formation, as well as its current activities.

Within Hyogo prefecture, there had not previously existed a self-help organization focusing on the South American Spanish-speaking community, and although there were a number of efforts made within the local Catholic churches, over time such movements to organize would inevitably fall into disarray and come to an end. From the author’s experiences, South American communities often seemed to place more of an importance on familial ties, rather than on neighborly or local community ties. For this reason, activities involving groups that share no blood relationship, often result in disputes occurring over individual interests, making it difficult to maintain harmony over a sustained period of time. The event that initially led to the formation of the Hyogo Latin Community, was a particular instance where there was a need to find a community leader who could attend the “Hyogo Foreign Prefectural Residents Coexistence Meeting,” an event organized in 1999 by the Hyogo Prefectural International Policy Section (as it was called at the time). For this series of meetings, a body of foreign residents living in Hyogo prefecture were placed in a central role, to work together with individuals from the Hyogo prefectural and Kobe municipal governments, as well as staff members from the Hyogo International Association and the International Affairs Department of the Kobe International Center for Cooperation and Communication. These activities were carried out as an extension of the “Hyogo Foreign Prefectural Residents Revitalization Meeting”, which had begun in the aftermath of the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake, with the aim of promoting the inclusion of residents with foreign backgrounds in civic

life. For this reason, the author called upon a Peruvian individual who already assumed a type of leadership role in the local South American Spanish-speaking community, to be the primary actor in establishing a movement that at the time did not yet exist in her community. The author received this request to find a participant for the aforementioned meeting, from a staff member at the Hyogo prefectural government, and the author also received an additional request for the translation to Spanish of printed meeting materials, as well as for Spanish language interpreting services, and the author has continually attended every session of this ongoing series of meetings since its inception. As of writing, this meeting continues today, as an annual/biannual event, where the leaders of various foreigner self-help organizations of various backgrounds, the leaders of civic organizations involved in local community activities, and academic advisory members convene. The meeting now also enjoys the attendance of the governor of Hyogo prefecture.

To act as a leader, the Peruvian individual selected was a male in his sixties, referred to here as “G”, who was regarded as an individual with a highly trusted reputation, with many Peruvians coming to him for various forms of advice. The author would meet this individual at the meeting for the first time, and as she worked as his interpreter, the author became involved in self-organized Latin American Spanish-speaking groups, and started her efforts to support such groups in making their activities more sustainable. At the time, an organization within the Takatori Community Center had been conducting Spanish language computer workshops, and the author suggested that this individual participate in them. With the skills gained from that workshop, the individual then went on to propose to make a Spanish language newsletter that compiles various kinds of information related to everyday life and information provided by the local government, which was still quite lacking at the time. The individual requested support to the Hyogo prefectural government to aid in printing an informational newsletter, and through these efforts, the individual was able to publish and

distribute 400 copies of this newsletter, entitled “Hyogo Latino”, made available for free, through the author’s organization, World Kids Community. Demand for this newsletter continued to grow nationwide, and as more and more requests came in, more copies were printed, and by finding advertising sponsors, the individual was able to secure funds for postage and color printing, helping to gradually improve the content contained therein.

In conjunction with these activities, the author also called upon a Peruvian female named “R”, to create Spanish language programming for FMY, and lead other activities, such as a mother-tongue (or heritage) language class and counseling services, by hiring her in a part-time capacity as a staff member of World Kids Community. She had previously been working at a shoe factory in Nagata ward, but with her oldest son entering elementary school, she had a desire to switch to a part-time job. She exhibited a deep understanding of the need for Spanish language broadcasting and for mother-tongue language classes for children from Spanish-speaking countries, and together with the author, she convinced a group of Spanish-speaking parents and guardians to start a classroom for a small group of students. In this way, “G” acted as the leader, and “R” carried out the working duties as a paid staff member, and the South American Spanish-speaking group’s self-help activities began to gradually expand.

After 4 years passed, since these activities began in 2000, “G” decided to move his base of activities elsewhere, and focused all of his efforts on printing the aforementioned newsletter together with members of a different group. In response to this, “R” assumed leadership of the organization, and decided to expand her column “Mujer Latina”, which had been a regular feature in “Hyogo Latino”, and to release it as its own stand-alone periodical. As the group had been operating under the same name as the former newsletter, the group also changed its name to the Hyogo Latin Community, which although still resided within the World Kids Community, was steadily moving toward organizing itself as its own independent entity. Although the organization already had its own bylaws and

volunteer staff members, “R” still needed to assume additional duties as a staff member of the “World Kids Community”, and she needed further motivation to begin consider enlisting a board of directors and establish more detailed bylaws, so her group could become more independent. In 2008, she appointed a board of directors that consisted primarily of individuals of South American origin, and she renamed the periodical “Latin-a”. As the periodical was able to find more and more advertising sponsors, it steadily began to increase the number of issues printed, and as of writing, the organization prints and delivers 12,000 copies of the periodical, free of postage charges to locations nationwide. Furthermore, the mother-tongue language class has expanded to serve roughly 30 students, and by enlisting the support of parents and guardians, students now learn about the culture and customs of their home countries in addition to their language, and receive support in doing their schoolwork assigned from their schools in Japan, and are provided with support that meets their individualized needs. Moreover, the organization also provides Spanish language consultation for various needs, and holds an annual event commemorating Peru’s independence, for the Peruvian community, which is the largest Spanish speaking group, as well as providing support for various events for other South American communities. The “Fiesta Peruana Kobe 2015”, which was held on July 19th, 2015, was attended by 800 people from various Latin American communities from around Japan. After operating for 10 years as part of the author’s organization, in April 2011, the Hyogo Latin Community formed its own independent organization which resides inside of the Takatori Community Center.

The image of such civic work in the eyes of South Americans, rather than being that of pure altruism, is commonly viewed as a convenient line of work in which such workers use lofty ideals and goals to justify their work which is often funded by government money. This perception is caused by the fact that many international non-governmental organizations headquartered in developed nations, set up local offices and hire local staff in most South American

countries, making it hard for many to envision what grassroots social activism truly looks like. Even from the author's viewpoint, based on her many experiences engaging in planning and collaborating in implementing activities with South American community members, and through experiencing firsthand the hardships of managing sustainable grassroots activism, the case of the Hyogo Latin Community, which has persevered for more than 10 years can be said to be an extraordinary rarity. Some factors that can be said to have aided in the organization's sustainability are as follows; (1) the leader's personal qualities, (2) sustained support provided by a Japanese-driven civic organization, (3) and motivation gained through recognition of such work by greater society. The leader must not only possess leadership skills and exercise them outwardly, but she should also maintain a humble personality to encourage harmony with other organization members, and in this case, must be able to skillfully switch between Japanese and South American societal customs, and also maintain a high level of flexibility to work with and to bring out the best in all members involved. Added to this, the leader also must have a stable base of income, to enable her to focus all of her efforts toward this non-profit work. In contrast, the former leader and founding member "G" was only conducting his activities to issue the aforementioned newsletter, in a volunteer capacity, as opposed to working for the organization as a staff member, although the organization did provide him with the expenses necessary to publish the newsletters, as well as other expenses for things such as soccer tournaments in the community. As a result, as the newsletters became more and more popular, the founder felt a desire to personally profit off of this activity, leading him to leave the organization to continue this activity elsewhere as a for-profit business. Ultimately, this led to the discontinuation of sustainable publishing activities for this newsletter. The role of civic organizations in such situations is to provide an environment in which members can direct all of their focus on their main activities, at least until a solid foundation is built so the activity can continue independently. Moreover, the

members involved must consciously take agency in their own activities, and be able to stand on equal footing with the organization providing them with support. Some members of Hyogo Latino were able to acquire this know-how of how to operate a civic organization, by starting out as participants within a Japanese civic organization, based on Japanese cultural norms and customs. Within such a framework, the Kansai Brazilian Community was able to achieve independence after 5 years, and the Hyogo Latin Community did the same in 10 years.

The 10 years that the Hyogo Latin Community spent on working together with Japanese civic organizations, with a shared sense of purpose, helped the organization receive great societal recognition for its achievements, and with this recognition they have been able to earn the trust of the Peruvian embassy, the Hyogo prefectural government, and the Kobe municipal government. As a result, during the fiscal year of 2012, the organization was able to receive the “Hyogo Universal Community Building Award”, an award that is given to recognize social activities performed within the prefecture, regardless of the activity’s target age-group, gender, disability or lack thereof, and culture, wherein the activities actively impact society, with the aim of creating a more inclusive, “Universal Society”, where “community members take active roles in helping each other,” with the aim of making a local community that is inclusive to all its residents, and where all residents are able to reach their full potential, among numerous other awards.

This kind of far-reaching societal recognition helped to increase the motivation of activity members. For the Hyogo Latin Community, it was absolutely vital for the activity members to acquire the abilities required to operate a civic organization within Japanese society, in order for the activity to continue on a long-term basis. These abilities were not simply skills in the simplest sense of the word, but rather a keen awareness required to recognize the differences of the differing cultures and customs, and differences in ways of thinking. This process also brought about positive changes for the Japanese civic organization

members involved. Through working together with other activity members who held different perspectives and ways of thinking, consulting with each other, and maintaining harmony while engaging in activities, the flexibility and tolerance of the group as a whole increased, and members were able to recognize the importance of taking time to build good faith and respect each other as peers.

It goes without saying, but there are still issues that need to be resolved. Although several board members have parted ways with the organization, due to their pursuit of personal profit, as well as differences that arise between Japanese and South American concepts of harmony, many volunteers have stepped in and contributed their time and effort to fill this gap. With that said, there is still a shortage of members of the affected language-speaking group, who wish to step up and take an active role in the process, and this is an issue that still needs to be addressed. When such organizations attain great societal accolades, it is of utmost important to take that moment to reexamine the original mission of the organization, and to remain humble and not be driven by a hunger for fame, and to recognize the importance of all of the members who make your activity possible. Needless to say, such knowledge as provided above, is something the author and members were able to attain over time, through first-hand experience. During the course of a recent meeting, where members reflected on lessons learned from an event they had organized, members noted that it is important to not fall into complacency, in order to keep this self-help and empowerment organization from becoming thought of as a self-serving privilege of sorts, or at worst, as part of a systemic mechanism to prevent progress or maintain the status quo, which public institutions can conveniently use to explain away any calls for real change.

The executive director of the self-help organization, “R”, looks back on her 18 years of service, and summarizes her experiences as follows, “when I was first approached to take part in these activities, I joined with the simple thought that I wanted to help the community as somewhat of a ‘big sister’, as I had faced

many difficulties when I first arrived in Japan. However, 18 years later, I have learned how I am now connected to the local community here in Japan, and have obtained so much information that was previously unavailable to me, and in being able to now live life in the way that I want, I truly feel empowered. I am sincerely delighted that I was able to find this opportunity, and I truly realize how such activities have impacted and enriched the lives of my family, friends around me, and not to mention my own life as well.”

## **5. Conclusion**

With public policies to accept foreign workers becoming more prevalent starting in 2018, and with the momentum generated through the preparations being made to host the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, the multilingualization of information has significantly advanced, and the market for such services has steadily expanded.

As noted in this chapter, it is still quite uncommon to find concrete examples in Japanese society of the multilingualization of various forms of media for the purpose of community building, and for this reason such activities as those described here can still be considered to be “pioneering examples”. With that said, there has been a sharp increase in the number of non-profit organizations that now provide multilingualization services similar to those provided by FACIL, for such government institutions including not only local government offices, but prefectural, and national governmental bodies and institutions as well. A majority of local municipal governments nationwide now recognize the societal need for the multilingual translation of vital information, and policy measures to create networks of volunteer translators/interpreters continue to expand, with FACIL’s members being called upon to provide instruction and training to such volunteers, and such requests increasing year by year.

“Multicultural coexistence”, a term that came into common parlance, in the wake of the great earthquake of 1995, has helped to raise awareness among

residents and has led to increased attention toward groups within the local community, such as foreign expatriates, that have a variety of different needs. In 2005, in response to the civic activities implemented by such grass roots organizations, often to address areas where public policy lagged behind, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications organized the “Seminar on Fostering Multicultural Coexistence (chaired by Dr. Keizo Yamawaki, Meiji University professor)”. In the report produced during that seminar, “multicultural coexistence” is defined as a state where “people of various nationalities and ethnicities strive to create mutual relationships based on equality, and live together as local community members.” In 2006, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications further made a recommendation for a “Program to Foster a Society of Multicultural Coexistence”. The program consists of the following: (1) Assistance provided for communication, 1) Multilingualization of community information, 2) Assistance for Japanese language teaching and teaching about Japanese society, (2) Assistance provided for everyday life, 1) Housing, 2) Education, 3) Working environments, 4) Medical/healthcare/welfare, 5) Disaster risk-management, 6) Miscellaneous. Furthermore, the program extends beyond policy measures to provide assistance as can be seen in its following recommendation items: (3) Community building to further multicultural coexistence, 1) Raising awareness in the local community, 2) Empowering resident of foreign origin to enable their self-reliance and participation in society, (4) Building an infrastructure to drive policy making related to multicultural coexistence, 1) Building infrastructure at the local governmental level, 2) Establishing roles and responsibilities for community stakeholders and encouraging collaboration and cooperation. The recommendation shown above should be recognized as a step forward, as an example of a comprehensive, systematic program, that also clearly states the need to change the current consciousness of the citizenry of the host society.

Based on this policy recommendation, incremental steps are being taken at

the local governmental level for a large number of municipalities, with such municipalities drawing up concrete local policy measures to address this issue. It must be noted, however, that it is critical to adequately link this recommendation with specific policy measures and identify practical activities and applications in the field that will help address the areas given therein, as a recommendation alone, is incapable of changing the public consciousness and society as a whole. The multilingualization of various forms of media and information, when used to foster reciprocal, bilateral communication, acts as a valuable “means” to change the consciousness of local residents, no matter how incremental this change is. It must be noted, however, that even with 13 years elapsing since the initial policy proposals were made, it is still not a simple task to engage in such activities, and as a great amount of time is yet required, the issue remains of how to establish an unrelenting process that will continue into the future.

At the summer festivals for the local community in which FMYY and FACIL reside, it has become a common, and unsurprising sight to see typical food stalls offering foods such as *takoyaki* and *yakitori*, alongside stalls that offer Vietnamese fresh spring rolls, Korean *jeon*, Nepalese curry, among other offerings. These encounters with “diversity” provide the local residents with a small pleasure to partake in. By enjoying the differences found in our food and cultures, we embark on a more long-term experience of working together and deepening our bonds as community members, and along the way we will surely encounter situations where we may be at odds with each other, but we can learn to embrace our differences in values, as something that helps to inspire us, to ultimately broaden our perspectives by reminding ourselves of the importance of being open-minded when comparing ourselves to the “other”. By taking part in such activities as described here, the number of residents who share this type of thinking slowly but steadily grows. It must be noted, however, that once such experiences become more commonplace, a great deal of effort must be put forth to maintain this way of thinking. For such multicultural thinking to take root

and continue to blossom in the local community, and for it to be maintained, it is an absolute necessity to document such activities, in the form of records and memoirs that can be easily understood by anybody.

For such a reason, it can be said that it is absolutely vital for “multilingualization” to be more frequently utilized, as a vital tool to make media and information more accessible and equitable for one and all.

## Notes

- 1 Transitioned to become the Takatori Community Center in 2000.
- 2 Currently referred to as the Kobe Central Catholic Church.
- 3 Currently referred to as the Kinki Regional Bureau of Telecommunications.
- 4 Hibino, Junichi. “Transcending Our Insistent Focus on the Channels Used for Transmission – FMYY Becomes an Online Broadcasting Station.” *Community Broadcasting in Japan – The Gap Between the Ideals and Reality* – written and edited by Satoko Matsuura, KOYO SHOBO, June 2017, Chapter 14, pp. 196–211.
- 5 This award was established in the fiscal year of 2010, and through this award, the network established between Kyodo News and regional newspapers is used as a platform to showcase and provide encouragement to organizations that are actively engaged in counteracting the difficult systemic issues posed by such phenomena as population decrease, etc., with the aim of revitalizing local communities. As a general rule, individual newspapers in each prefecture nominate 1 organization, to amount to a total of 50 organizations, and these organizations are judged by a selection committee composed of experts. The fields of activities in which the organizations are engaged in range widely from such activities as producing local specialty goods to providing elderly residents with assistance, etc. For its 10th year in the fiscal year of 2019, the total number of organizations that have received this award rose to 500.
- 6 As of April of 2018, this number has been reduced to 15 member municipalities, since it was determined that “a certain degree of progress had been achieved,” among other such observations that were made.

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