

The Hyogo International Association's Cultural Exchange Publication

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# Come HIA

Hyogo International Association



[For Inquiries]

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# HIA aims for a safe and comfortable life for foreigners in Hyogo Prefecture!

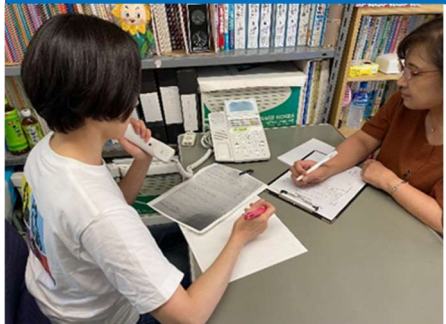
Since April 2019, the Hyogo International Association (HIA) has been operating the "Hyogo Multicultural Counseling Center," a comprehensive lifestyle consultation service for foreign residents. The center offers information and consultations on daily life, both in person and over the phone, with 3,551 consultations conducted in 2023.

## ① Hyogo International Association Information and Advisory Service



The "Hyogo Multicultural Counseling Center" is composed of two parts: the "Consultation for Foreign Residents in Hyogo" and the "NGO Network for Foreigners' Assistance KOBE." The "Consultation for Foreign Residents in Hyogo" offers general daily life counseling by trained counselors, free legal consultations by lawyers, and immigration services provided by Immigration Bureau staff on weekdays.

## ② NGO Network for Foreigners' Assistance KOBE



Additionally, general telephone consultations are available via the communication app LINE. The "NGO Network for Foreigners' Assistance KOBE" provides consultations on daily life every Saturday and Sunday, except during the year-end and New Year holidays. Counselors are able to assist in 22 languages (as of 2024) with the help of translation applications.



**Consultation for Foreign Residents in Hyogo**  
Consultation services are free of charge and confidentiality is guaranteed

<p><b>Weekday Consultation</b></p> <p>Monday ~ Friday</p>	<p><b>Hyogo International Association Information and Advisory Service</b></p> <p>How to consult: In person or by phone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ General Consultation - Monday to Friday 9:00~17:00</li> <li>■ Legal Consultation - Mondays 13:00~14:00/14:00~15:00 (Booking required)</li> <li>■ Immigration Consultation - 3rd Thursday 13:30~14:30/14:30~15:30/15:30~16:30(Booking required)</li> </ul> <p>(Closed: Saturdays, Sundays, The national holidays and the Year-end and New Year holidays)</p> <p>★LINE Call available. Only call. No text messaging</p>
<p><b>Weekend Consultation</b></p> <p>Saturdays and Sundays</p>	<p><b>NGO Network for Foreigner's Assistance KOBE</b></p> <p>How to consult: In person or by phone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ General Consultation - Saturday and Sunday 9:00~17:00</li> </ul> <p>(Closed: Year-end and New Year holidays)</p>

■ Hyogo International Association Information and Advisory Service  
〒650-0044

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FAX 078-382-2012

■ NGO Network for Foreigner's Assistance KOBE  
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(inside the Kobe Central Catholic Church)

TEL 078-232-1290  
FAX 078-271-3270



Official LINE  
ID : @hyogoic



Official BLOG

**[For Inquiries]**



Foreign residents living in Hyogo Prefecture can consult the "Hyogo Multicultural Counseling Center" for any difficulties or inquiries they might have in their daily lives. The service is free of charge, and confidentiality is kept. Feel free to reach out for advice.



Center Director

The Hyogo Multicultural Counseling Center receives a variety of inquiries from foreign residents. While many of these issues are similar to those faced by Japanese citizens, there are two main types of inquiries that are particularly common among foreigners as follows:

### **[Case 01]** I don't understand *Japanese or the system!*



English Consultant

In Japan, most information is displayed only in Japanese. Additionally, many situations require communication in Japanese, which can be very challenging for foreigners who cannot speak, read or write in Japanese. For example, instructions on how to dispose of trash at a garbage station, communication sheet brought home by children from school, making hospital appointments or understanding a doctor's diagnosis, procedures for credit cards or renting an apartment, and work contracts all require Japanese language skills. There are also many systems and rules that differ from those in one's home country. The biggest problem is not being able to read them or being unable to communicate what you want to say to others.

### **[Case 02]** There are things you can't do *depending on your residence status!*

Foreigners entering or staying in Japan must have one of the residence statuses defined by the Immigration Control Act. There are 29 major types of residence statuses, and each status has specific regulations regarding whether and how one can work in Japan. For instance, "Student" status is for studying at universities or vocational schools, and one can only work up to 28 hours per week with permission for activities outside of their status. With "Spouse or Child of Japanese National," if the marriage to a Japanese citizen ends in divorce, the residence status is lost, and one will no longer be able to stay in Japan. Additionally, residence statuses have expiration dates, and when these dates (e.g., 6 months, 1 year, 3 years, or 5 years) arrive, one must visit the Immigration Bureau with various documents to renew their status. Such restrictions related to residence status are an ongoing concern while staying in Japan.



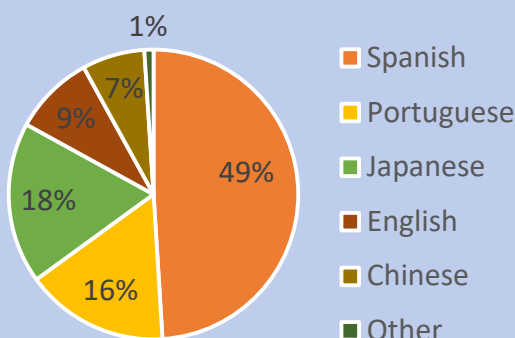
Chinese Consultant

#### Supported Languages:

- Japanese
- English
- Chinese
- Spanish
- Portuguese
- Vietnamese
- Korean
- Tagalog
- Indonesian
- Thai
- Nepali
- Burmese
- Khmer
- Malay
- Mongolian
- Sinhala
- Hindi
- French
- German
- Italian
- Russian
- Ukrainian

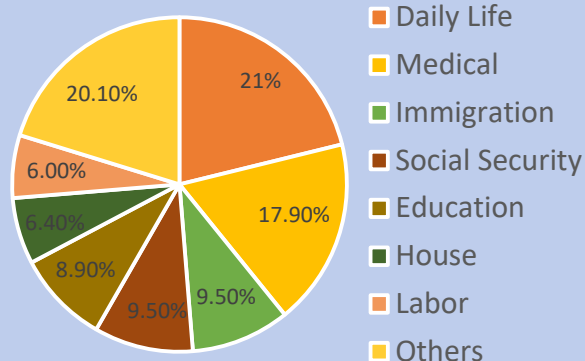
In order to provide support, even in small ways, to foreign residents facing challenges in their lives in Japan, the staff at the Hyogo Multicultural Consultation Center assist with interpreting between their native languages and Japanese, connect them to the proper service desks to resolve their issues, and offer advice on how to handle their situations.

**Breakdown of Consultation Languages (2023)**



Since its establishment in 1994, the Foreign Resident Information Center has had consultants for English, Chinese, Spanish, and Portuguese. A notable feature is the high number of consultations in Spanish, as there have been few service desks available for Spanish speakers.

**Breakdown of Consultation Contents (2023)**



"Daily life" refers to consultations regarding various aspects of everyday living, such as waste disposal, while medical involves many inquiries related to health insurance and appointment scheduling. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, there were many consultations regarding vaccination and specific loans.



# Working Together

## Launch of the "Harima-city Japanese Class"



A session from Training for Supporters: "Easy Japanese" is rather difficult!

"We want to create a Japanese language class in our town!"

The strong desire of the Harima-cho International Friendship Association (HIFA) Secretariat, which had long been providing support for foreign residents in the town, inspired many to take action, leading to the establishment of the Harima-cho Japanese Class.

After being consulted by the Secretariat in 2021, HIA worked together with the municipality and HIFA to address various issues one by one, such as: "What kind of class should it be?", "How will we handle the budget?", and "Who will act as the coordinator?" As a result, we developed the class concept: "A Japanese class open to the community — where both supporters and learners participate as residents of the town."

In the spring of 2022, training for supporters took place (10 sessions, 20 hours), with 21 new members joining. This was followed by the launch of the class in the autumn of the same year. Since then, a variety of enjoyable activities have been offered through the cooperation of Japanese teachers and supporters.

Now, in the third year of the class, we remain true to the vision shared by the town, the International Exchange Association, and all the supporters. In this "Japanese Class of our town," where all participants have fun, we will continue working together to move forward.



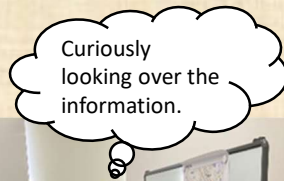
A classroom where everyone participates with a smile.



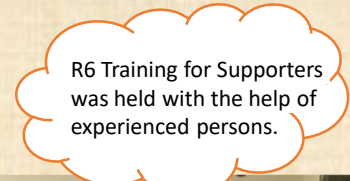
You can join the class with your children! They also seem very interested in the activities.



Chatting while marking favorite spots on the map.



Curiously looking over the information.



R6 Training for Supporters was held with the help of experienced persons.



## Event: Reading Children's books from around the world

From July 24 to August 7, HIA hosted a "Reading Week in Foreign Languages" to coincide with the "World Children's Book Exhibition." Over the five days of the event, Coordinators of International Relations from South Korea, China, and the United States led reading sessions that attracted a diverse audience, including both children and adults.

On the first day of the Korean reading session, the reader felt a little anxious, but as they continued, the tension eased. They offered some explanations in Japanese, encouraged the audience to join in saying the Korean words from the picture books, and asked questions, creating a warm and friendly atmosphere.



## SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to thank the following HIA volunteer translators for their assistance with this volume's publication; we would not have been able to produce it without their help.

**Ms. Kaoru Shinohara, Mr. Takeshi Sugiura, Mr. Chiaki Nagai, Ms. Yuki Tatsumi**

