

**From editor:**

Following the recent increase of non-Japanese speaking IIA members, we have translated into English a summary of IIA News.

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**Message from IIA President, Hisae Narita**

**“How we Respond to Emergency”**

Due to the spread of novel coronavirus (COVID-19), we are experiencing an unprecedented emergency. Japanese government has lifted the declaration of a state of emergency, though the end of this pandemic is still unforeseen worldwide. We should prepare ourselves for the long-term self-restraint to overcome COVID-19.

I assume all IIA members are spending their daily lives with utmost efforts and patience to protect themselves and families from being exposed to COVID-19. Some members may have been suffering from a long self-restraint and we need to share their problems and try to assist them in any way we can.

All events of IIA have been cancelled or postponed since February, including the Annual General Assembly slated in May, and all resolutions were put to a vote by written decision for the first time in our organization’s history.

Under these circumstances, I would like to present the course of IIA's activities this year, as stated below and ask the members for understanding and cooperation.

1. All our activities which would involve person to person contact will be implemented in compliance with national or local government’s guideline, and by taking the precautionary measures to ensure people’s safety and peace of mind.

2. Based on the above paragraph 1, the contracted projects from the city will be implemented after mutual discussion with City’s Division of International Policy.

3. Due to the expectation of significant reduction in revenue from contracted projects from the city, there may be a drastic change in the planned projects and budget in the middle of the year.

4. Office opening date, working hours, staff assignments and other operating rules of the IIA office will possibly differ from the normal system to reduce costs as much as possible.

5. Although the services to the members will be significantly lower than usual due to this emergency, the membership fees remained unchanged, for which I am grateful for your understanding and cooperation.

6. The year 2020 is expected to be quite an unusual year due to our limited activities, but I would like to consider this emergency as an opportunity to rethink what international exchanges should be and how the association should respond.

We intend to carry out more fulfilling international exchange activities with the members after overcoming these difficulties.

### **Report of IIA Annual General Assembly (Resolution by written votes)**

In this issue, we will report the outline of each resolution and the result of the votes.

#### **Resolution No. 1: 2019 Projects & Activities and Financial Report**

● Exchanges with affiliated cities overseas: MAY- Acceptance of Leshan City official delegation; JULY- Acceptance of Medan City official delegation & Gardena City youth delegation; AUGUST- Dispatch of Ichikawa youth delegation to Medan City; OCTOBER- Dispatch of Ichikawa citizens delegation to Rosenheim City & Ichikawa citizens to Wisconsin, USA in cooperation with Chiba Prefecture/ Wisconsin State Alliance Project; NOVEMBER- Dispatch of Ichikawa citizens delegation to Medan City.

● Ongoing projects: ICHIMAIL – all year round; CHEF TEACHER (10 schools, 30 classes) from June to December; Survival Japanese Language Classes in August; and Japanese Volunteer Teachers' training courses from November to February.

WORLD FRIENDS, a new project, facilitated video letters exchanges between Myoden Elementary School and 186th Street Elementary School in Gardena from August to March, which emerged as a new form of youth exchange program. However, most of the projects were cancelled or postponed due to the closure of public facilities in the city following an increase in coronavirus cases after February.

In March, the Symposium/Cross-cultural Communication was planned to be held as part of International Day event in Ichikawa, but had to be postponed.

As for the financial report, income and expenses fell below the budget level with 76% and 69%, respectively, due to the increased contracted projects from the city and the effectiveness of cost-cutting measures. The account balance resulted in a surplus of about 1.7 million yen, without using the financial adjustment fund.

On April 27, two auditors conducted an audit and it was confirmed that the settlement of accounts and accounting process were accurate and appropriate.

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**Voting Results:** Number of voting forms sent: 391, Number of replies received: 231 (Approved 224, Disapproved 1, Abstained 6). Therefore, the first Resolution was approved.

#### **Resolution No. 2: 2020 Activities/Projects and Budget Proposal**

FY2020 was forecasted to be the year with relatively fewer overseas city exchanges and contracted projects from the city, since the Olympic and Paralympic Games were scheduled to be held. In addition, the strong impact of the spread of COVID-19 infection led to uncertainties about the future which makes it difficult to decide the course of activities and estimate the budget. For these reasons, we have formulated a budget plan based on the current cancelled and postponed projects. However, there is a prospect of having significant changes in the future, depending

upon the COVID-19 infection status. Particularly, a substantial decline in income can be expected due to a decrease in contracted projects. Even if we strive to reduce expenses further, the deficit on budget for the current fiscal year is inevitable. Therefore, we are obliged to transfer the money from the financial adjustment fund to income budget.

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**Voting result:** Number of voting forms sent 391, Number of replies received 231, (Approved 224, Disapproved 1, Abstained 6)

Therefore, the second resolution was approved.

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### **Resolution No. 3: Appointment of Officer**

Although the year 2020 is not the period for election of officers, Mr. Katsuhiko Koizumi was appointed as Chairperson of the Student and Youth Committee, the position which was previously vacant.

Mr. Koizumi is a corporate officer living in Ichikawa, and was dispatched to Gardena City in 1999 as a member of Ichikawa City Youth Delegation. Since then, he has cooperated with IIA activities, such as homestay program, support for student delegates, participation in town festivals, activities for official delegation from affiliated cities, and others.

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**Voting result:** Number of voting forms sent 391, Number of replies received 231, (Approved 224 , Disapproved 1, Abstained 6)

Therefore, the third resolution was approved.

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### **Aspiration of the New Officer**

Mr. Katsuhiko Koizumi was appointed as Chairperson of Student and Youth Committee.

### **Greetings from Mr. Koizumi:**

“My name is Katsuhiko Koizumi. I was appointed as chairperson of the Student and Youth Committee.

In summer of 1999, when I was a high school student, I had an opportunity to be one of the student delegates to sister-city, Gardena, where I stayed for 10 days with a host family. Looking back on those days, it reminded me of many valuable experiences and precious moments.

Since then, I have been helping IIA to welcome citizens’ groups from affiliated cities and assist Ichikawa students who will be dispatched to cities overseas, with a lot of help from former and current IIA presidents and staff members of IIA office and the City’s Division of International Affairs. Also, I have been getting in touch with my host family and friends in Gardena.

One day, I received a music CD from one of my friends in Gardena. The CD contained my favorite music and was labeled with a picture taken at LA's Disneyland.

I was surprised that a high school student of the same age could have such a skill because I didn't know how to download music into CD-ROM at that time. This experience made me realize the differences in technical know-how between Japan and the United States. Owing to this experience, I would like to encourage students to participate in international exchange activities to gain first-hand knowledge of international relations.

As an OB of dispatched students, I believe that my role in IIA is to share my knowledge and experiences to the next generation. At first, I intend to connect with former student delegates in different age groups through SNS and motivate them to participate in IIA events.

I am determined to exert my utmost effort to help my juniors fulfill an enriching experience in international exchanges and take an active part in the international community.

### **New lineup of Division of International Policy, Ichikawa City**

Last April 1, as the city announced the personnel relocation, and the Division of International Policy introduced three new staff members along with the changes in the respective assignment of current staff, as follows:

Mr Takeshi Oyamatsu, **New Director**

Ms Kumiko Suzuki, Deputy Director

Ms Eri Asao, In charge of IIA matters and World Friends

Mr Yoichi Yamada, **New staff** in charge of Interpretation & Translation, International Exchange Organization, City of Medan, City of Issy-les-Moulineaux

Mr. Teru Fukui, In charge of Consultation services for foreigners, Japanese language volunteer classes, Disaster prevention agreement

Mr Koki Makimoto, **New staff** in charge of Ichimail, City of Gardena, City of Leshan

Ms Emi Komatsu, In charge of Chef Teachers, City of Rosenheim, German Day

Ms Takako Sato, Specialist in English language

\* Three staffs are temporarily assigned to work in the Special Cash Handout Department.

### **Greetings from Mr. Oyamatsu**

"My name is Takeshi Oyamatsu, and I was appointed as Director of International Policy Division, from April 1, 2020. I truly appreciate IIA's continued support to our projects regarding international exchange policy and others. Currently, social activities are stagnated not only in our city, but also in our affiliated cities around the world due to global spread of coronavirus. I hope that this difficult situation will come to an end soon so we can take delight in welcoming the early summer breeze. I look forward to your understanding and steadfast support when operations return to its normal state."