

Fukushima International Association would like to communicate in multiple languages Fukushima in the "Now". We convey the voices of foreign residents, while also focusing on the activities of various international organizations and on the restoration efforts after the disaster.

※ Translated versions of the newsletter can be downloaded from the FIA's homepage.



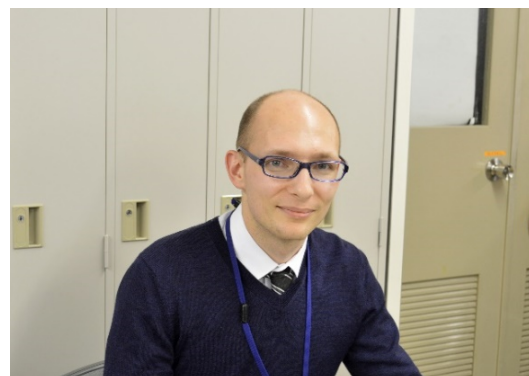
## Voices from Fukushima

### A New Coordinator for International Business has arrived from Germany

In August 2018, Simon Essler from Germany became the Coordinator for International Business for Fukushima Prefectural Government's Business Creation Division's Medical Industry Cluster Promotion Unit. Simon has experience living in Tokyo, Kanazawa and Okinawa. He said, "I'm looking forward to discovering the charms of Fukushima and every part of Tohoku while I'm living here."

Around 4 months have passed since Simon was appointed with this new post, and so we wanted to ask him about his job and his current situation in Japan.

(Interview date: December 25th 2018)



#### - Could you please tell us about your hometown?

I was born and raised in a town called Bielefeld in North Rhine-Westphalia. The town has a big forest, a castle and a slightly bigger population than Fukushima City. Then I lived in Düsseldorf during and after university.

#### - What made you become interested in Japan?

I became interested in Japanese culture when a high school friend of mine gave me a book by Haruki Murakami. Then, I visited Japan for the first time 14 years ago. After graduating high school, I spent a long break where I traveled around the world and I stayed in Japan for one week.

#### - Please explain what you do for your job.

I am mainly involved in organizing exhibitions on medical devices and renewable energy. These exhibitions are held several times a year in Fukushima and Germany. Currently, I am preparing for the "E-world energy

&water 2019" exhibition, taking place in Essen, Germany in February 2019. It is Europe's biggest international exhibition for the energy-related industry.

#### -When do you feel a sense of accomplishment with your job?

I feel especially rewarded when we hold exhibitions because I spend several weeks preparing for them. Also, I'm always learning something new every day and I enjoy interacting with business people involved with manufacturing different kinds of products.

#### - How do you find Fukushima so far?

I really like the scenery of Fukushima City with Mount Shinobu. On my days off, I actively go and explore the city. After starting this current job, I began to think about what was needed for Fukushima to grow. I think it would be good if the city becomes a place that more young people find interesting. Ultimately, they are the ones who will shape the future of Fukushima.

#### - Germany has decided to end all nuclear power plants by 2022. How much do the German people have an interest in Fukushima?

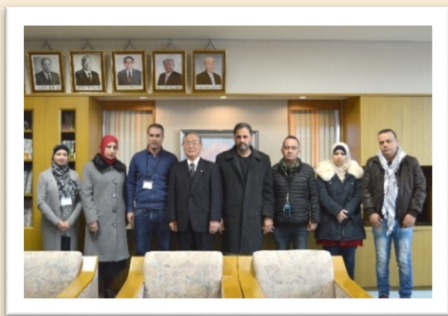
Everyone is interested about the situation in Fukushima. However, I think the current situation isn't being conveyed properly.

With Chernobyl being near Germany, the German people already had some interest about nuclear power before the accident in Fukushima. Also, they are highly aware in conserving the global environment such as using green energy and reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

#### - Is there something you would like to do in the future?

I really enjoy taking trips on trains so I'm thinking of using the Seishun 18 Kippu (Youthful 18 Ticket) and visiting many places. Right now, I'm planning on taking the Tadami Line and going to Aizu-Wakamatsu and Niigata. I've already visited a quarter of the towns in Fukushima and so I'd like to go to places I haven't been yet.

## Palestinian Authority Workers Visiting the Disaster Area



7 workers from the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Department of Palestinian Affairs (DoRA) came and visited Namie Town. With the ongoing situation of refugee camps, these workers wanted to incorporate some of the measures taken in revitalizing the Tohoku region and use them towards improving life at refugee camps.

Namie Town suffered a lot of damage during the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami. The whole town was also forced to evacuate after the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant Accident. But as of December 2018, around 800 residents, out of 17,000, have returned back to the town.

Fadia, a DoRA worker, said, "It was useful to learn about the revitalization measures taken in Namie Town. However, with the continuing situation of refugee camps in Palestine, it is hard for us to grasp the circumstances of refugees. As a result, there are still many challenges that lie ahead of us in implementing similar measures at refugee camps."

## Deepening an Understanding of Cultural Roots

Nine descendants of Fukushima residents who immigrated to Latin America and North America visited the prefecture for 10 days. They came from Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Dominican Republic, and the United States. The study tour aims to deepen the understanding of participants' cultural roots as well as the efforts Fukushima is making towards revitalization.

During the visit, the participants talked with the Vice-Governor, visited Commutan Fukushima and experienced Japanese cultural activities. Lastly, the participants stayed with a home stay family.

Missy Keiko Miyashiro from Hawaii-shima Fukushima Kenjin Doshikai said, "I was able to visit a temple that might have a connection with my family and so I think my grandmother will be very interested to hear about that. Also, because of Hawaii's history with tsunamis, I was concerned for the Fukushima people impacted by the disaster."



## A 2 Hour Trip Around the World! The Next Destination is Britain!

On Saturday, January 19th, FIA held the Global Communication Café in Shirakawa. Zoe Vincent from Britain was the lecturer and presented about British living, food and customs. More information about the next event will be up on FIA's homepage and SNS. We look forward to seeing you at the next GC Café!



## Multilingual information on the Revitalization effort from "Fukushima Restoration Station"

"Fukushima Restoration Station" hosts the latest data on food safety efforts and the activities of those supporting Fukushima in 9 different languages (Japanese, English, Mandarin, Korean, German, French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese).

<http://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/site/portal-english/>

## Please Send Us Your Thoughts and Feedback

We would appreciate hearing your thoughts and opinions. Please send us any information that you would like to see covered or information about people willing to be interviewed.



### ● FIA Information

#### Support Desk for Foreign Residents

Here at the FIA, we provide consultation services for foreigners in English, Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and Portuguese.

English, Chinese, Japanese Consultation

Every Tuesday to Saturday from 9:00 to 17:15

Korean, Tagalog, Portuguese Consultation

Thursday from 10:00 to 14:00 ※Appointment necessary for 4th and 5th

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