

Network News

Scripture

"I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles,"

Isaiah 42:6 (NIV)

"Everyone needs a place to belong"

"Everyone needs a place to belong, in any situation."

So writes a support staff of HELP Asian Women's Shelter in KYOFUKAI's regular information magazine "k-peace" (No. 11, published December 2018). "Women are deprived of their place of belonging in various situations. For instance, they lose their place of belonging when that place becomes unsafe as a result of violence, when they have no friends or people they can rely on in such situations, when they cannot remain in the safety of their place of belonging due to unemployment, disease or low wages, or when they suddenly lose a person they have relied on. These are not situations that can be avoided by living conscientiously; they are situations that can befall anyone," writes the support staff who also worked as a women's counselor. Her words apply to practically all residents of HELP.

HELP Asian Women's Shelter was founded in 1986 as part of KYOFUKAI's 100th anniversary project. Over its history of more than 30 years, it has provided temporary emergency shelter to more than 5,050 women from sixty-some countries. These women have come from diverse language, culture and religious backgrounds, and have stayed at HELP either alone or in twos or threes with their children. HELP has also received women of foreign nationalities regardless of their status of residence in Japan, and women who are on public welfare as well as those who are not.

While the facility has some constraints, such that it has no dedicated medical staff and it is not barrier-free, it is open even to women who are not eligible to stay at a public emergency shelter. Residents of HELP are allowed to stay for two weeks as a rule, but they may stay longer, depending on their situation. There have been women who have stayed at HELP for several months, due to the long time it took for them to prepare to proceed to the next step with the support of a women's counselor from a public institution. The entire staff, including support staff, night-duty staff and cooking staff, cooperate as one and constantly give thought to "what is best for

each resident." HELP's mission is to provide a safe and secure place of belonging.

According to the Cabinet Office, Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers throughout Japan have received 106,110 consultations last fiscal year (total of face-to-face consultations and telephone consultations received at 281 nationwide Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers). Approximately 90% of all consultees were women. However, there are likely many times more DV-victimized or homeless women and children who spend their days in danger and in a state of insecurity without knowing where or who to turn to.

We at HELP are preparing a number of programs again this year with the hope of providing moments of relief and pockets of happiness even if to a small extent, to residents who cannot risk going outside for fear of being tracked down and children who cannot go to nursery school or primary school because their whereabouts must remain unknown.

KYOFUKAI's financial basis has weakened more than ever before, in part due to our members coming into old age. At the same time, the facility building is aging, the bath is leaking, and other such problems are occurring one after another. We receive a subsidy from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government on a continuous basis, but no financial support whatsoever from the national government. Thus, we cannot but wish for financial support and donations that would allow us to provide even better support while responding to requests for shelter from Spousal Violence Counseling and Support Centers, consultation centers for women and other such public institutions.

As an organization that is deeply engaged in the World Day of Prayer movement, we hope to continue to move forward with the message delivered from Slovenia on March 1, 2019: "Come, everything is ready."

"Please help us so we may hear the voices of the hearts of people around us and support those in need"

Hiroko Matsui (HELP Asian Women's Shelter Director)



Overview of HELP Beneficiaries in 2018

Non-Japanese Women and Children Victims of Violence and Japanese Women Securing Time to Prepare for a New Life

In 2018, HELP provided shelter to 52 people, including 11 women of non-Japanese nationality, 28 women of Japanese nationality and 13 accompanying children. As a whole, these residents stayed at HELP for a total of 2,023 nights (128.5% compared to the previous year). While there were 15 less residents compared to 2017, their total length of stay increased, with many residents tending to stay for longer periods than last year's residents. Music therapy was offered again throughout the year (three times a month) in 2018 as with last year.

To ensure the safety of residents who are victims of domestic violence, HELP staff accompanied 31.6% of such residents to a medical facility. This was almost double the percentage of last year (14.7%). With respect to non-Japanese residents, 50% and a larger percentage were accompanied to a medical facility compared to all residents, but this marked a decrease from last year (80%) and the year before that.

<Non-Japanese Women>

The 11 women of non-Japanese nationality who stayed at HELP this year included 5 women who also brought their children. There were 9 children in all, ranging from preschoolers under the age of 6 to school-age children.

The largest reasons why these women sought shelter at HELP were due to domestic violence (80%) and homelessness (20%). There had been no pregnant women seeking shelter at HELP for a while, but there were a number of pregnant women among the non-Japanese residents in 2018.

Non-Japanese residents stayed at HELP for an average of 50.03 days, which was more than a month longer than in 2017. This is because many of these women required time to look for a place to stay after leaving HELP or to wait for an opening at a medium to long-term facility.

- DV victims: DV victims who were introduced to HELP in 2018 included women who had just come to Japan and therefore could speak hardly any Japanese. With little or no experience in living in Japan, they had poor grasp of the monetary value of things and had difficulty shopping for daily necessities. To help them acquire even a slight understanding of the Japanese language, they were offered Japanese language lessons at HELP, and they practiced going shopping accompanied by HELP staff. HELP staff also made sure the resident children had moments of enjoyment in the shelter by providing fun and games suited to their respective ages. In cases where a mother was unable to look after her children because of the effects of DV, the staff took the children to a children's facility in the neighborhood and spent time with them there. Given the tendency for longer lengths of stays at HELP, it is clear that an appropriate framework needs to be established to ensure proper care is given to children who have been abused.
- Pregnant women: In 2018, a number of women at different stages of pregnancy were given shelter at HELP.
- Care for residents and former residents: In 2018, indoor events were organized for the residents (Halloween costume party, etc.), and outings to the zoo and other venues were planned in the summer.



<Japanese Women>

The 28 women of Japanese nationality who stayed at HELP this year included two who brought their child(ren). As their reasons for seeking shelter, close to 60% sought shelter due to homelessness (59.4%), followed by domestic violence (intimate partner violence (IPV); 21.9%), violence by a family member (9.4%), pregnancy (3.1%) and other reasons (6.3%). Compared to last year, the ratio of women staying at HELP due to DV (IPV), violence by a family member and pregnancy decreased slightly, but the ratio of homeless women saw an increase.

Among the Japanese residents in 2018 who were victims of DV (IPV), there was an elderly woman whose stay at HELP enabled her to improve her relationship with other family members and take a step toward a new life. On the other hand, however, there was also a woman who wished to continue living in safety at HELP but her continuing adverse relationship with relatives cast a shadow on finding a place to stay after leaving HELP.

The homeless women who come to HELP all differ in age and background to coming to the shelter. Some need to make regular visits to a mental health clinic to heal their spirit that has broken over the course of their hardships, and others need to make a habit of eating regular meals to regain their physical condition. Whatever preparation they need to make a new start, requires time. Still some women need to accumulate days they live in safety and simply wait for a sense of security to develop within themselves.

These women have stayed at HELP for an average of about 24.1 days. While there were several women who were waiting for an opening at their next place and moved out within a week, many stayed for longer than three weeks, as was the situation last year (26.6 days).

<Telephone Consultation>

In 2018, we handled 624 telephone consultations (91% compared to last year) from people representing 17 countries including Japan (28 countries last year). Consultations that were common throughout the Kanto prefectures, regions in Japan, such as the Tohoku, Tokai, Chugoku and Kyushu regions, and overseas, widely ranged from consultations concerning the progress of lawsuits that have been filed in their home country to consultations about status of residence and future means of living from women seeking stable residence after having a child and who have lost touch with their husbands.

Aside from consultations from the callers themselves, consultations were also received from nearby local governments (consultation desk), international exchange associations, hospitals, the police, foreign support organizations and social workers, with regard to the status of residence of families where child abuse or domestic violence has occurred and about making coordinated efforts with relevant institutions. We have responded by providing the necessary information and exchanging views on these issues. Foreign nationals who are require assistance come from increasingly diverse countries, such that their living conditions vary on a case-by-case basis and cannot be standardized.

In addition to the above, there has been a continuous stream of telephone consultations from Japanese callers who grieve about the hardships of living after having suffered DV or sexual abuse, as well as a fair number of consultations about the Christian church that is in a period of transition and its response to women's issues. Such calls not only indicate that many callers prefer to remain anonymous with their consultation, but also that there are many women out there who need someone to listen to their troubles, whatever their troubles may be.



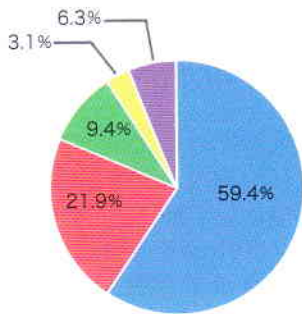
Artwork of paper flowers made by HELP residents (cherry blossom tree)

Statistical tables for 2018

Reasons for Seeking Shelter

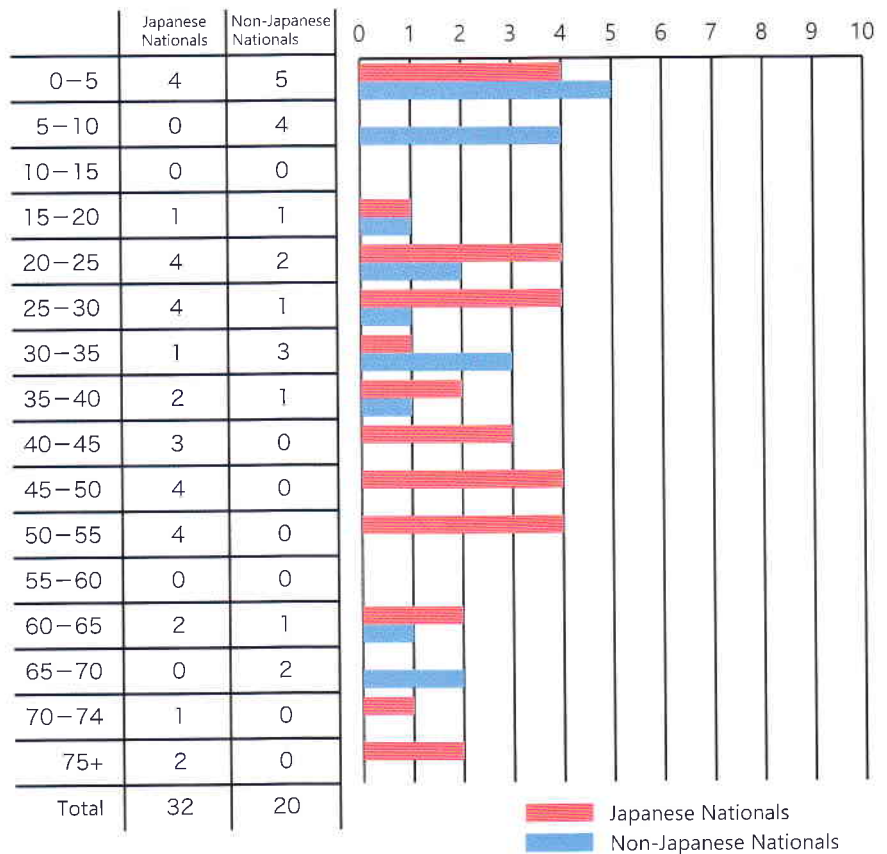
(April 1, 2018 - March 31, 2019)

Japanese Nationals



Homelessness	19
IPV	7
Violence by family member	3
Pregnancy	1
Other	2

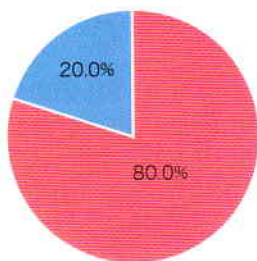
Age Distribution of Residents



Number of HELP Residents by Nationality

(April 1, 2018 - March 31, 2019) ※ Includes residents whose stay extended over the year-end.

Non-Japanese Nationals



IPV	16
Homelessness	4

Number of HELP Residents by Nationality

Nationality	Women	Accompanying Children
Philippines	2	1
Bangladesh	2	2
South Korea	2	0
USA	1	3
Morocco	1	0
Afghanistan	1	0
Sri Lanka	1	3
China	1	0
Sub-total	11	9
Japan	28	4
Total	39	13

11 non-Japanese nationals women of which 5 were accompanied by children

28 Japanese nationals women of which 2 were accompanied by children

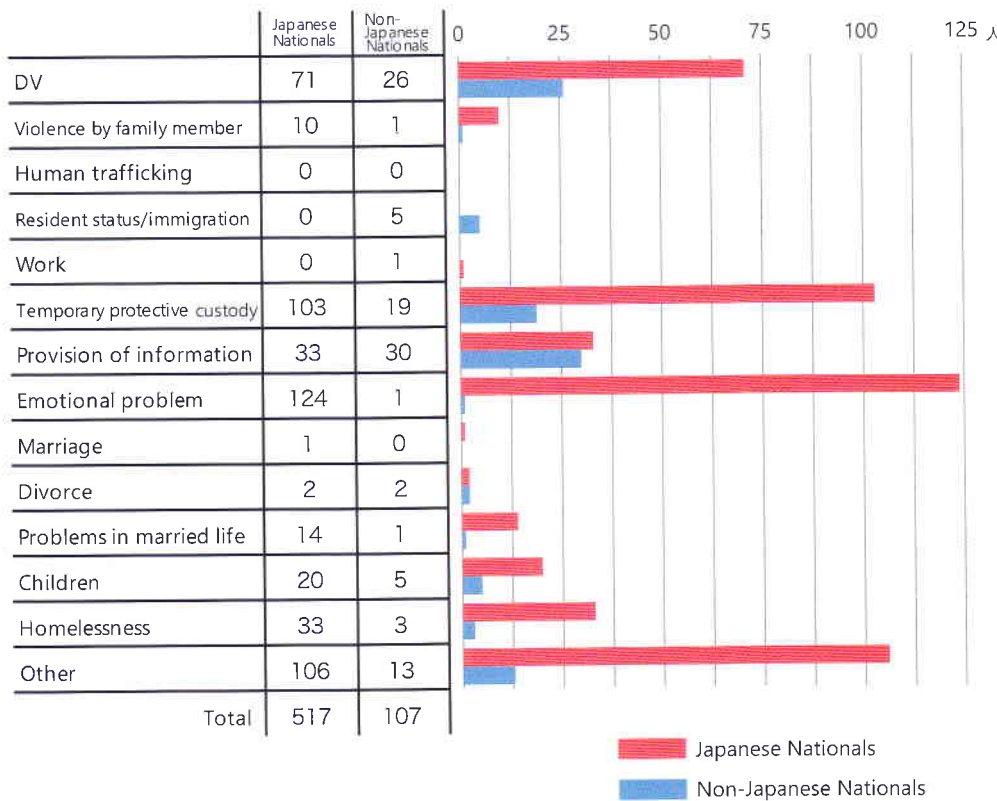
Breakdown of Non-Japanese Residents by Region

Region	No. of Residents
Tokyo	14
Saitama	6
Total	20



Number of Telephone Consultations

by subject



by Nationality

Nationality	No. of consultations
Japan	517
Philippines	32
Thailand	10
USA	9
Peru	9
South Korea	7
China	4
Nepal	4
Morocco	4
Afghanistan	4
UK	3
Taiwan	3
Pakistan	2
Singapore	2
Angola	1
Bangladesh	1
Unknown	12
Total	624

Destination of Residents after Leaving HELP

Destination	Japanese Nationals	Non-Japanese Nationals
Welfare home	18	16
Apartment	0	0
Women's center	1	0
Home country	0	0
Home	2	1
Home of friend or acquaintance	2	0
Streets	0	0
Hospital	1	0
Live-in employment	0	0
Unknown	0	0
Undecided	3	0
Other	5	3
Total	32	20

Avg. Length of Stay by Non-Japanese Residents

2014	38.14days
2015	27.14days
2016	40.14days
2017	16.38days
2018	50.03days

Total Length of Stay by Nationality

Japanese Nationals	722days
Non-Japanese Nationals	1,301days
Total	2,023days

Support for Learning Japanese

HELP Asian Women's Shelter provides shelter to women and children of diverse nationalities. These women who live far away from home in Japan, a country that is foreign to them, face the most difficulty with the Japanese language. Thus at HELP, we provide support for learning the Japanese language with hopes of making their future lives easier. Below is a brief introduction of the Japanese language class at HELP and the "Live Your Dream Award" that Soroptimist International grants to women as a scholarship program for learning Japanese after leaving HELP.

～ Thoughts on Teaching Japanese at HELP ～

I recently had the opportunity to teach Japanese at HELP for the first time in quite a while. My students were not only non-Japanese women, but non-Japanese women of various nationalities, and it occurred to me anew that the residents of HELP are multifarious, ranging from those who have lived in Japan for a long time to those who have just arrived here.

Before, I mostly taught people who have lived in Japan for a relatively long time and were exposed to the Japanese language, and who could carry on a conversation in Japanese though they could not write the language. I also taught people who were not fluent in speaking Japanese but were able to understand what was being said to them. There were also those who were able to read and write some basic kanji characters.

This time, however, I had students who could not understand "Kore wa tsukue desu (this is a desk)," for example, because they had no knowledge that "tsukue" refers to a desk, to begin with. It was the first time for them to learn Japanese. I therefore began by teaching hiragana, the Japanese alphabet. By the second lesson, they became able to somehow read hiragana albeit haltingly, and thereafter, I proceeded with my lessons always in reference to a hiragana chart.

My students are usually highly motivated. I had a student who carried a baby at her breast and always appeared not to be getting enough sleep. There were times when it was obvious to anyone's eyes that she was exhausted. Within their limited time at HELP, learning how to use Japanese freely is an extremely difficult task, particularly to those who are being exposed to the language for the very first time. I sincerely hope that everyone will continue to study Japanese in their new places of residence. For my part, I hope to answer to their enthusiasm by thinking how best to teach everyday Japanese in a manner that matches each student.

Isako Suzuki (Japanese language class instructor)



Artwork of paper flowers made by HELP residents (hydrangea)



～ HELP and Soroptimist International's "Live Your Dream Award" ～

Soroptimist International of Musashino encountered HELP for the first time in 1999 and has since supported the facility for some twenty years.

Soroptimist International is an international volunteer organization of women who work together to transform the lives and status of women and girls through a program for social and economic empowerment. It has over 75,000 members in 3,000 clubs in 123 countries and regions, with each country/region belonging to one of four Federations throughout the world. The organization celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2021.

The Musashino Club engages in activities for realizing the goal of "transforming the lives of women and girls through education" that is upheld by Soroptimist International of the Americas. Central to our program is the "Live Your Dream Award." With the cooperation of HELP, many women have applied for and have been granted the award continually since 2001, the majority of which has constituted financial education grants for Japanese language acquisition by women of non-Japanese nationalities.

As a Soroptimist, we are pleased beyond words that women who have experienced various hardships of life have received the education grant and are using it to learn Japanese while making a life for themselves in Japan. A woman of non-Japanese nationality was granted the second place award by Soroptimist International of the Americas again this year, and will use the grant to study Japanese beginning in April.

With the cooperation of HELP, the Musashino Club hopes to continue lending a helping hand to improve the lives of as many women as possible.

Hisae Okada (Soroptimist International of Musashino)

HELP Workshops Have Been Held

Workshops that included a facility tour were held for female counselors based in Tokyo. With HELP staff as lecturer, one workshop was held in November 2018 under the theme of "Selecting a shelter that matches the needs of each person seeking shelter" and another was held in January 2019 under the theme of "Social resources for foreign nationals." The former was attended by 11 participants and the latter by 30 participants. The number of women of non-Japanese nationality who face difficulties in life in Japan is increasing along with the yearly increase in the number of foreign residents in Japan. As many more cases now need to be addressed urgently in consideration of lifestyle and cultural differences, flexible responses are increasingly being demanded of parties that provide assistance to such women in need. Given this situation, our facility has been attracting growing attention as a social resource to counselors who serve as a direct contact point for consultations, such that there was hardly enough time to respond to all the practical questions that were raised during the Q&A session that was held toward the latter half of the workshop.

2019 Request for Donations to Help Maintain HELP Women's Shelter

It is now the season of beautiful hydrangeas.
We hope you are welcoming this season in good health and spirits.

Once again this year, we wish to express our deepest gratitude to each and every one of you for your generous support which allows us to continue our activities to help women and children in need of help.

Last year, HELP provided shelter to 39 women from Japan, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, China, South Korea, the United States, Morocco, and Afghanistan, and 13 children of diverse ages.

We also received telephone consultations from women representing 17 countries.

In today's society full of violent incidents and accidents, many women and children seek HELP (a safe place where they can spend a peaceful time) to escape from violence and abuse by parents and family members or to break free from their painful past and difficult present. To help these people, all of us staff at HELP will make redoubled efforts to provide heartfelt support.

Amid constantly changing circumstances in Japan and overseas, creating an environment as a "home" that provides safety, security and the basic necessities of life has become an even more pressing issue than ever.

Despite our difficult financial situation, we strongly wish to carry out HELP's mission, and thus ask for your kind support in the form of maintenance donations.

June 2019

KYOFUKAI – Japan's Christian Women's Organization, est.1886
HELP Asian Women's Shelter
Mizuho Iida, Women's Welfare Committee Chairperson
Hiroko Matsui, Executive Director
HELP Asian Women's Shelter Director



Accounts for Donation

(In Japan) Post Office Account: 00110-5-188775
Account Name: 女性の家 HELP (Josei no ie HELP)

(From Overseas)

Bank Name: MUFG Bank, Ltd. (SWIFT code: BOTKJPJT)
Branch Name: Okubo Branch (Address: 1-1-19 Kitashinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo, Japan)
Account Number: 364-0103915
Account Name: KYOFUKAI

