COVID-19 Multilingual Support Project is run by a volunteer group comprised of students and graduates of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. We provide information related to COVID-19 in Japan in 16 languages on our website: « COVID-19 Multilingual Information Portal ».

The website is available in Easy Japanese, English, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, Korean, German, French, Spanish, Iberian Portuguese, Brazilian Portuguese, Arabic, Urdu, Vietnamese, Tagalog, Indonesian and Nepalese*. It covers various topics, from basic preventative measures and steps to take when you may be infected with COVID-19, to financial support such as the « Special Fixed Benefit » and housing benefit, changes in VISA and other immigration processes, employment support, and consultation services for victims of domestic violence and discrimination. Check our multilingual social media accounts for latest updates on the website. We are also working on diffusing our website through local networks by asking local governments, international exchange organizations, and expat communities to make use of the information we provide. Thankfully, we have been receiving positive responses from our users, such as the following: “I felt left behind and stressed in this pandemic, but I now feel secured thanks to the information I got from the website.”

For reasons such as differences in language and culture, foreign residents generally have more difficulty in accessing information, and thus face difficulties on various occasions. For instance, they may have trouble figuring out what to do when infection is suspected, or how to fill out application forms in order to receive benefits. The number of foreign residents in Japan exceeded 2.9 million in 2019, and many of them work for key industries such as construction, farming, and the service sector. Through this project, we aim to help foreign residents—who are an important part of the Japanese society—lead a safe and secure life even under this crisis.

* Nepalese translation provided by Arc-communications Inc. as part of their CSR activity.

Our second goal is to create discussion on the importance of multilingual information support under crises. As the number of foreign residents in Japan continue to increase, the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the Japanese population will become more diverse, and providing close support for all will become ever more important. Every citizen will have to actively think about how the multicultural symbiotic, post-coronavirus society should look like, and not just passively wait for the government to solve their problems. We intend to achieve the second goal through media coverage, publishing articles on NOTE, giving lectures, and publishing policy proposals.

COVID-19 Multilingual Information Portal
https://covid19-tagengo.com/
COVID-19 Multilingual Support Project
PR staff: Itaba
covid19.multilingual.jp@gmail.com