ADMINISTRATIVE STEPS TOWARDS UNIVERSAL DESIGN
To Realize A Society Where Everyone Can Live with No Difficulties

Introduction of Universal Design
Realizing the necessity of introducing Universal Design to the prefecture when I learned about it for the first time in 1998, I decided to adopt Universal Design as an administrative concept of the prefecture.

The background of my decision is as below:

1. Human Rights Center was established in 1997. Many people do not regard the issue of human rights as their own problems although it involves familiar themes such as social participation of the disable, foreign residents, child abuse and domestic violence as well as social integration.

2. Shizuoka Prefecture enacted “Act for building a town of welfare” in 1995, but due to the use of the expression “welfare”, the measures were limited to specific administrative areas and it was difficult to extend to all the departments.

3. I was reassured of the necessity of administrative support for the disable to live their own life when some said that there were no disabled people but there were people with some functional disabilities and that some of those performed outstandingly.

Also some people with disabilities mention that special facilities and consideration based on barrier free concept can be a burden for them, building a wall between them and people with no disabilities. Development of buildings and town where everyone can access easily is most desired.

4. Constructing a society where everyone can participate regardless of age or gender is necessary as we face an aging society and time of global exchanges, that is, in other words, a society of Universal Design.

Discussing the actions to those issues, I learned about Universal Design, whose concept is to design for everyone. I decided to introduce Universal Design to Prefecture's basic policy of administration for its local development.
Shizuoka Universal Design Promoting System

It was decided that an administrative system for the adoption of Universal Design into every area of prefectural policy would be established. Universal Design was for the first time introduced to as a Japanese administrative concept by Shizuoka Prefectural government as the Universal Design Office (consisting of five staff members) was set up in 1999. Also I made myself director of Headquarters of Promoting Universal Design (other representatives are Director of Prefectural Police Department, Superintendent of Board of Education, and the Directors of each department). Furthermore, the Committee of Specialist to promote Universal Design was set up to submit opinions and suggestions. As the concept can be applied in every field of administration, each operation was reviewed from Universal Design point of view to draw five-year Universal Design Action Plan in 2000, and the action plans have been put into practice.

Examples of Universal Design

In order that Universal Design concept be put into practice, various efforts are being made such as educating residents and enterprises, applying the concept to infrastructure, and remodeling the existing buildings. As for soft side, lectures for business and residents are held and various manuals to adopt Universal Design are made and distributed to municipal and prefectural offices. Furthermore, University Design contest is open to people from elementary school students to adults to promote the concept of Universal Design.

Improvement of official envelopes

As a person who has visual difficulties requested that envelopes of the prefecture be marked to be recognizable, staff of Universal Design office and related offices discussed the problem. Instead of using point system for visually disabled people, the design itself was changed so that elderly people and foreigners as well as visually disable people can recognize the envelopes easily.

- Enlargement of characters on the envelopes
- Embossing of Prefectural logo for visually disabled people to recognize it
- Notches at the sticking tab on envelopes used for tax notices
Educating children
Promotion of educating children is underway for better understanding of Universal Design and for applying the concept in their work environment and local area in the future. Training manuals were publicized on the web last year for teachers of elementary and junior high schools to teach the students. Also, various events such as awards of elementary schools for their performances related to Universal Design are held to educate children from their childhood.

The Second Shizuoka Universal Design Conference
Shizuoka Prefecture was the proposer of holding the National Conference for Universal Design with other local governments and NPO throughout the country. And the first National Conference for Universal Design was held in Hamamatsu City in January 2002. This was the beginning of annual Shizuoka Universal Design Conference in collaboration with NPO and Volunteer groups. The conference focuses on children and it contains presentations by kindergartners and pupils. Activities of NPO, which participates in organizing the conference, are also exhibited. There are administrative officers from other prefectures to participate in the conference due to the diversity of its contents.

Examples of Introduction of Universal Design
In order to promote Universal Design, the prefecture applied the design to some of its facilities.
- Ogasayama Sports Park (ECOPA)
  Universal Design was applied in designing Ogasayama Sports Park, which was the main venue of National Sports Festival and National Sports Festival for Disabled last year, so that every one could use easily.
    - Moving sidewalk and a slope car along the access route at the entrance of the park.
    - 296 wheelchair users’ seats at the first row of the second floor of the stadium.
- Prefectural accommodation
  Prefectural accommodation is designed and constructed for everyone to
easily use regardless of age or disability. Four housing estates have been constructed since 2000.

- No bumps in an apartment
- No bumps at the entrance and doors easy to open
- Movable kitchen tables that can be adjusted to the height of users
- Big switches for easier use

- **Signs used in Shizuoka General Hospital**
Redid the signs in the hospital from a Universal Design point of view for better understanding.

- Numbering all the department and examination sections enabled non-Japanese speaking people to find the destinations easily.
- Large white printing on a dark background enabled elderly people to see clearly.
- Textile of the floor was changed and BGM is on at the cross of the corridor for people with visual disabilities to know that people might come along.
- LED placed in the eyes of a mascot character, an owl (Fukuro in Japanese has another meaning of “no difficulty”) blink in an emergency for people with hearing disabilities to notice.

The percentage of people who have difficulties finding their ways to their destinations decreased from 38% to 12% after Universal Design was introduced, and 86% of the people think the signs are useful for easier access.

**Joint Development with Private Sectors**
To promote the introduction of Universal Design, Shizuoka Industrial Research Institute collaborates with private sectors to develop products under Universal Design Project. A dining set for a Japanese room, which is easy for the elderly, was developed in 2001 and has been on the market through DM. It has been popular among middle-aged women and the elderly, showing good sales figures.

**Actions of Municipalities and Reactions of Residents and Companies**
More actions have been taken by municipalities since the prefecture introduced Universal Design. Hamamatsu city was the first administration in Japan to enact Universal Design Act in 2003, while the
chamber of commerce in Higashi-Izu town is working with the residents to develop a town of Universal Design for both the residents and the visitors. As public study groups and NPO of Universal Design are established, interests of the residents and companies are increasing. Recognition of Universal Design by the residents increased from 31% in 1999, to 46% in 2000, 60% in 2001, and 66% in 2003, and we are aiming at 70% next year. Participation by companies increased from 25% in 2000 to 32% in 2002, and 34% in 2003, aiming at 50% in 2010.

**Development of an Attractive Local Area with Genuine Richness of Land and People**

Shizuoka Prefecture has in its comprehensive plan the basic concept of “development of an attractive local area with genuine richness of land and people”. In order to develop such an area in times of super aging society and global exchanges, Universal Design is a necessity.

Universal Design can be applied in all areas including housing, public facilities, roads, parks, various facilities and their services in the area, and consciousness of the residents. To apply the concept of Universal Design to each of those, companies and residents as well as administration need to work on it. Also, it is considered that the operation should be organized by NPO and volunteer groups rather than by administration and that there should be a region focused center for operation.

Universal Design is likely to be a global standard and action standard for local development as time changes in the 21st century with enforcement of Accessible and Usable Building Law and Accessible and Usable Transportation Law. Although most of the local governments were not interested in Universal Design when Shizuoka Prefecture first introduced it 5 years ago, many local governments are now working on Universal Design. Spiritual Universal Design, which is to respect different people with consideration, leads to the spirit of morals. Universal Design will be truly established as a universal design when everyone participating in local development including administration, designers and architects is aware of the concept to start the development and when everyone cares and acts with consideration for others. I would like Shizuoka Prefecture to expand the promotion of Universal Design to municipalities, companies and residents until such time comes.