

# Developing a New Generation of Global Leaders

The first fully residential international school in Japan, the International School of Asia, Karuizawa (ISAK) will open in Karuizawa-machi, Nagano Prefecture, in September 2014. Masaki Yamada spoke to **Lin Kobayashi**, executive director of the ISAK Foundation.



Lin Kobayashi, executive director of the Foundation for International School of Asia, Karuizawa

**S**upported by a large number of individuals, companies and organizations, ISAK will provide high-quality academic programs for first- to third-year high school students from around the world. There will be around fifty students in each grade, and ten to eighteen students in each class. ISAK received official permission from Nagano Prefecture to establish a boarding school in Karuizawa and also received approval from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology to become a “special provision school,” which would allow students to receive a Japanese high school diploma. All classes will be taught in English. The school plans to have students receive an International Baccalaureate diploma when they graduate.

ISAK is developing a curriculum in cooperation with domestic and foreign educators. Located on a nature-filled campus in Karuizawa, the school will emphasize teamwork and leadership.

“The key qualifications next-generation leaders need to have are the ability to understand the true meaning of diversification among people of many different backgrounds and ways of thinking; a risk-taking attitude to meet new challenges; and the ability not only to solve problems, but also to recognize them,” says Lin Kobayashi, the ISAK Foundation’s executive

director. “ISAK’s mission is to create a new frontier and cultivate leaders who can bring change to the Asia-Pacific region and to the global community.”

The ISAK Foundation has held an annual ten-day summer school in Karuizawa for potential students for the past two years. Last year thirty-one junior high school students attended the school. Of them, fifteen were Japanese students. The remaining sixteen students came from ten countries, including India, the Philippines, Myanmar and England. Students communicated in English.

The summer school program includes a variety of academic and extracurricular activities, including a leadership program, design thinking, math, drama, Asian studies, sports and agricultural activities. A total of fifty-seven students from seventeen countries are expected to attend the summer school this year.

“We would like to increase the diversity of ISAK even further by accepting more students from abroad,” says Kobayashi.

“The number of countries—seventeen—is not nearly enough. To increase this number, we have to expand our scholarships. We would like to receive more domestic and international support.” 

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*Masaki Yamada is a freelance writer.*

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COURTESY OF ISAK

Scenes from the ISAK summer school program for junior high school students