

Report of the Ninth Toyonaka Foreign Citizens' Council (Digest Version)

Toyonaka City initiated the Foreign Citizens' Council in July 2005 with the aim of reflecting the voices of foreign citizens in municipal policy. This was the ninth council. Eight foreign citizens exchanged opinions as council members at six meetings during their term of about two years since July 2020.

The theme for the ninth council was "What we can do for our local communities." The council members took the initiative to exchange opinions, thinking how to interact with Japanese neighbors and how to introduce different cultures, and made practical suggestions such as holding events.

May 2023

Toyonaka Foreign Citizens' Council Secretariat
(Human Rights Policy Division)

Major opinions expressed at the meetings (Summary)

Ideas for Foreign Citizens to Play Active Roles in Local Communities

World Quiz Competition

Contents	Holding a quiz competition in which mixed teams of Japanese and foreign participants work together using knowledge and experiences of each.
Aim	Shortening the mental distance between Japanese and foreign residents by having contact with each other.

Discussion Groups in Japanese

Contents	As an advanced version of existing Japanese classes, organizing discussion sessions on various themes where the participants can use their Japanese skills.
Aim	For foreign residents who have completed Japanese courses, creating a comfortable place and opportunities to use Japanese in practice

Language Classes in the Metaverse

Contents	Organizing language classes and other events utilizing the metaverse which enables us to communicate online.
Aim	Increasing opportunities of meeting people that have been reduced because of the COVID 19 pandemic

Support Desk to Connect Local Community Members to the City

Services and the International Center

Contents	Setting up a consultation desk at each elementary school district to connect local foreign residents to the city services, introduce information, provide consultation services, and solve problems in the community.
Aim	Providing and exchanging information at the local level

Internationalization of the City with Multilingual Signs

Contents	Making bus stops and road signs multilingual to develop a town with international atmosphere
Aim	To raise awareness of multicultural symbiosis among residents

System to Introduce Registered Foreign Residents' Groups

Contents	As a service for new residents, developing a system to introduce the International Center, key persons of each local area, and communities of foreign residents.
Aim	To promote cultural exchanges, and to utilize foreign human resources in local communities

Foreign Language Classes for Senior Citizens

Contents	Organizing language classes for senior citizens taught by foreign residents in the neighborhood to make opportunities to contact with foreign languages.
Aim	Support for senior citizens. Utilization of foreign human resources in local communities.

Human Library

Contents	Lending out time of registered foreign volunteers, as usual libraries offer books to enable people to use the time for cultural exchange and learning different cultures.
Aim	Cultural exchange, Utilization of foreign human resources in local communities

Other opinions

Here are more of the opinions expressed at the meetings.

- I feel foreigners are, if not discriminated against, viewed as being different from Japanese. I hope to be treated as a member of the same society. To realize this, I hope to increase opportunities for foreigners and Japanese to mingle with each other.
- Food-related events are likely to be popular and easy to join, though they are difficult to hold during the COVID 19 pandemic.
- What is desirable for foreigners is interaction with local people. Events for foreigners can also start support for children and senior community members.
- Many foreign residents give up visiting hospitals because they cannot communicate in Japanese. We need a support system for foreigners in medical settings.
- I wish there were events targeting people who have completed their parenting roles. I don't think there are enough events suitable for foreign residents who cannot find places to go after finishing parenting roles.

- One of the factors that impede closer relationship between foreigners and Japanese is "fear" on both sides. We should hold events at the local level to make people free from fear and get to know each other.
- It would be great if there were opportunities such as multilingual book-reading times for those who are interested in being exposed to foreign language books.
- How about taking short movies of the multicultural understanding efforts at the International Center and showing them to various people? I think the efforts will be effective to introduce different cultures and to boost international understanding.
- Many people do not know that interpreters are available at elementary schools. I hope the homeroom teachers will let the students know.
- I hope parents will have opportunities to join foreign language experience activities on a school visiting day and so on.
- Foreign residents, especially the seniors, find it difficult to fill out the documents sent from the city. I think the city should take some measures such as making documents in many languages or putting 2D codes linked to multilingual webpages.

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Toyonaka City Foreign Citizens' Council Secretariat

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