

The Second Yao City Foreign Residents' Council Meeting in FY 2015

[Minutes]

Date & Time: Jan. 26 (Tues.), 2016, 7:00 pm – 8:45 pm

Place: Conference Room 701, 7th Floor, Yao City Office

Council members at the meeting: TOKI Hikaru, OKUNO Tsunehisa, KAWAMOTO Yolanda, ZU Yan Ting, PARK Koon-ae, LE THI KIEU Nga, TAKATSU Nobue, PARK Yanghaeng, HUYNH TU VAN, FUJITO Satomi (titles omitted)

Project Management Department members: Mr. KINOSHITA (Council, Child Care Service Department), Mr. YOSHINAKA (General Manager, Human Rights Education Department)

Secretariat: Mr. MATSUSHIMA (Manager), Mr. KAWAZOE (Assistant Manager), Ms. MATSUZUKI (Culture and International Affairs Department)

1. Opening of the Council Meeting

2. Project in the Multicultural Society Promotion Model Area

Secretariat The Secretariat explained the efforts made in the Multicultural Society Promotion Model Area using handouts 1 and 2

Chairperson Are there any questions concerning this project?

Councilor Koon-ae Is there a reason why only Vietnamese residents responded to this questionnaire?
Aren't there any foreign residents of other nationalities in the Takamiminami Elementary School district?

Secretariat There are foreign residents of other nationalities in the Takamiminami Elementary School district, which serves as the model area. The standard model project started by having discussions with the Vietnamese community, then asked them to distribute and collect the questionnaire, and, as a result, all the responses were by Vietnamese residents. The responses to the questionnaire helped us understand the need to make efforts to solve problems regarding other areas and residents other than Vietnamese.

Councilor Koon-ae If you can only offer responses from Vietnamese residents as “foreign resident” responses, a thorough explanation should be provided.
On Questions 7 and 8 on handout 2, did the response choice include “Other” or did it have a

comment column?

Secretariat No, it didn't have a comment column.

Councilor Koon-ae It is possible to provide a response other than the choices provided, so a comment column is necessary.

In Question 7 "The reason for the troubles between foreign and Japanese residents", many responded "Foreign residents don't know Japanese customs and rules." However, in Question 8 "Efforts to make a comfortable town," many chose "I want Japanese residents to understand foreign residents" instead of "More opportunities for foreign residents to learn about Japan." The responses to Questions 7 and 8 seem to contradict each other. A thorough analysis is needed.

Chairperson We need to analyze the responses by the Japanese residents as well. It would be wonderful if some Japanese residents had responded that the Japanese residents need to learn more about foreign cultures.

Vice-chairperson The responses that Japanese should learn more about multicultural society and international understanding indicate the possibility that the Vietnamese residents were treated unfairly even though they were behaving in a way they considered natural. We need to investigate the inconveniences and troubles in daily life in more detail.

Chairperson There has been a case in which the incense that a Vietnamese resident used caused trouble in the neighborhood. Even if the cause of the trouble is not so serious, the different customs, lack of opportunity to learn about other customs, and the language barrier can complicate problems.

Secretariat Here is an example of a problem regarding garbage disposal. In an apartment building which prohibits the keeping of animals, some residents complained that Vietnamese residents had a dog. The Japanese resident thought that the Vietnamese residents had a dog because they saw cans of dog food thrown away in the garbage. However, the Vietnamese residents thought the dog food was for people and were eating it themselves because they eat dog meat in their culture and they couldn't read the Japanese writing on the can. This was a problem caused by the difference in cultures and the language barrier, which could have been solved if they had communicated better.

Chairperson As the Secretary has mentioned, the local residents, including city council members and residents from the foreign community, had a discussion in November. During the first half of the discussion, there were some complaints made by the city council members. However, in

the latter half, they began to feel the need to work on a project for better communication, regardless of whether they were members of the city council or not. They have decided to do an emergency drill scheduled in March. The meeting made us realize that we can find solutions to many problems through better communication.

Councilor Yanghaeng This is the first trial in the area, and I am hopeful that, through more activities, the Japanese and foreign residents can start to understand each other better.

3. Exchange of Opinions

◆ **Progress management of Yao City's Promotion of a Multicultural Society**

At the last Council meeting, we exchanged opinions about Fundamental Objectives 1 and 2 of the Yao City Plan to Promote a Multicultural Society. At today's meeting, we will exchange opinions about Fundamental Objectives 3 and 4. Although some have commented that it is better to focus our discussion on the projects with the lowest evaluation, since such projects are not the ones close to the daily lives of the foreign residents, the Secretariat will report their problems, and answer any questions residents may have.

We have asked members of Child Care Service Department and Human Rights Education Department to join this meeting, both of which allocate their budget on Yao City Plan to Promote a Multicultural Society. We will exchange opinions about Fundamental Objectives 3 and 4 mainly focusing on the projects by these two Departments.

Secretariat The Secretary explained the projects with evaluations C and D in Fundamental Objectives 3 and 4.

He also presented a summary on the projects by the Child Care Service Department and the Human Rights Education Department.

Summary

Vice-chairperson There was an exchange of opinions about support for child rearing and education.

1. There are many foreign residents who are unfamiliar with the childcare center system, and face problems due to the lack of basic information including the enrollment procedure, the tuition, and the difference between public and private centers. The local government provides information; however, this is not sufficiently conveyed. The local government should start providing information at an early stage of parenting by giving parents a brochure with information about childcare centers and kindergartens or showing them to the Child Care Service Department when they come to the city hall to register the birth to better familiarize them with the childcare facilities.
2. Some parents wanted their child to be accepted by the childcare facilities while looking for a job, which we found is possible.
3. We want the necessary measures for foreign residents to continue after the adoption of

kodomoen (centers for early childhood education and care) in 2019.

4. We would like the childcare centers to distribute enrollment brochures for the After School Care Program.
5. We would like the childcare centers, which currently lack interpreters, to be able to communicate important matters multilingually.
6. There are many parents who fail to take their child to medical checkups and other important procedures because of work or the inability to read the brochure in Japanese.

Chairperson

There was an exchange of opinions about support for children's education.

There are more than 360 children who need Japanese lessons. The current complement of additional teachers and interpreters cannot provide enough support.

1. The interpreters do not need any certification, and even foreign students can do the job. Although the demand is high, the number of interpreters, including Vietnamese interpreters, is not sufficient.
2. The interpreters are making a special effort not only to translate but to help the foreign children become accustomed to Japanese school life as well.
3. The additional teachers and interpreters contrive ways to help foreign children handle school life including writing *kana* (Japanese characters) alongside *kanji* (Chinese characters).
4. To help teachers, guardians, and children understand the importance of education for international understanding in today's world, we want to explain to them the measures taken in this regard by Yao City.

◆ Multilingual local papers

Secretariat

The Secretary introduced the multilingual local papers.

Yao City issues Yao City Guide bimonthly translated into Chinese, Vietnamese, and English. It is distributed through schools, childcare centers, public facilities, and the city website.

Some of the information in the Guide was outdated because it was issued only bimonthly, but it is scheduled to be changed to monthly from 2016.

Summary

Vice-chairperson

Many considered the City Guide to be basically effective.

It contains a variety of information about the local government and the community, and efforts are made to make it more understandable including the multilingual translation provided alongside the Japanese text and *kana* (Japanese syllabaries) to Chinese characters. Monthly issuance will enable it to post new information.

If its distribution is improved and utilized in more ways, it may be more useful.

Chairperson

We select articles that interest foreign residents from the monthly City Guide in

Japanese, and translate them into three languages and post them in the bimonthly multilingual version, but it is difficult to decide which pieces of information should be prioritized.

The layout should be improved to help the foreign readers find the corresponding translation.

An index would also be helpful.

The Japanese text should be more concise and clearer. I suggest that, by sharing information with the members of the Human Rights Education Department and the Child Care Service Department who have attended the meeting today, information such as the lack of interpreters be posted in local papers.

4. Close of the Council Meeting