

Shinjuku City Multicultural City Development Conference Discussion Report

July 22, 2024

Shinjuku City Multicultural City Development Conference

Introduction

The Shinjuku City Multicultural City Development Conference was established in September 2012 as an organization affiliated with the mayor. Since then, the conference has taken on topics such as “Improving the Educational Environment for Children with Foreign Roots,” “Support System for Foreign Residents in Times of Disaster,” “Further Promotion of Multiculturalism through the Use of Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza” and “Establishment of a Local Community Built by Japanese and Foreign Residents Together.”

During the conferences of past terms, the committee members exchanged specific views on multicultural living policies, and their opinions also included an awareness of multicultural living in the community. In particular, the reports of the fourth and fifth terms have a section titled “Foster awareness of multicultural living” under “Recommendations.”

This leads us to believe that fostering awareness of multicultural living in the community will make Shinjuku’s multicultural living policies more effective. For this reason, we set the theme of the recently concluded sixth term as “Fostering Awareness of Multicultural Living in the Community.”

In addition, since the city was to conduct its Survey on Multicultural Living in Shinjuku City in FY2023, the conference offered opinions and advice on the survey items and deepened the discussion based on the survey results.

Furthermore, after taking a walking tour of the Okubo area and visiting Okubo Chiiki Center and Okubo Library, we gained a better understanding of the local situation and initiatives.

The COVID-19 situation began to improve during the two years of the conference’s sixth term, and in May 2023 the coronavirus was downgraded to a Category 5 infectious disease (common infectious disease). Although the population of foreign residents in our city decreased during the pandemic due to entry restrictions, it is now on the rise again. The current foreign resident population is around 45,000, exceeding the population before the pandemic.

For Japanese and foreign residents to live together in harmony in the community, it is vital to foster an awareness of multicultural living and recognize each other’s cultural differences.

Over the past two years, the conference has had extended discussions on the theme “Fostering Awareness of Multicultural Living in the Community.”

With the hope of promoting Shinjuku’s multicultural living policies, we hereby report the results of these discussions by the Sixth Shinjuku City Multicultural City Development Conference.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Multicultural City Development	4
1. Foreign Residents in Shinjuku	4
(1) Foreign Resident Population by the Numbers	4
(2) Population Changes Before and After the COVID-19 Pandemic	4
(3) Population by Nationality	5
(4) Population and Change in Population by Visa Status	6
2. Multicultural Living Policies in Shinjuku City	7
(1) Japanese-Language Education Support	7
(2) Consultation for Foreign Residents	7
(3) Supplying Multi-Language Support at Service Windows, Etc.	7
(4) Disseminating Information to Foreign Residents	8
(5) Cultural Exchange Events	9
(6) Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza	9
Chapter 2: Discussion Themes	10
1. Theme for the Sixth Term	10
2. Background and Reasons	10
3. Discussion Items	10
4. Discussion Format	10
Chapter 3: Progress of Discussions	11
1. How Discussions Proceeded	11
2. Discussion of Survey Items (meetings two through four)	12
(1) Major opinions and the city's response	12
(2) Overview of the implementation of the Survey on Multicultural Living	13
3. Establish a Common Concept of “Awareness of Multicultural Living in the Community” (fourth and fifth meetings)	14
(1) “Multicultural living” stipulated in the Shinjuku City Basic Autonomy Ordinance	15
(2) “Multicultural living” in the Shinjuku City Comprehensive Plan	15
(3) Establishing a common concept of “fostering awareness of multicultural living”	16
4. Discussions Based on the Survey Results (sixth to eleventh meetings)	17
(1) Living in Japan	17
(2) Language (learning Japanese)	30
(3) Disasters and Emergencies	33
(4) Necessary Information	37

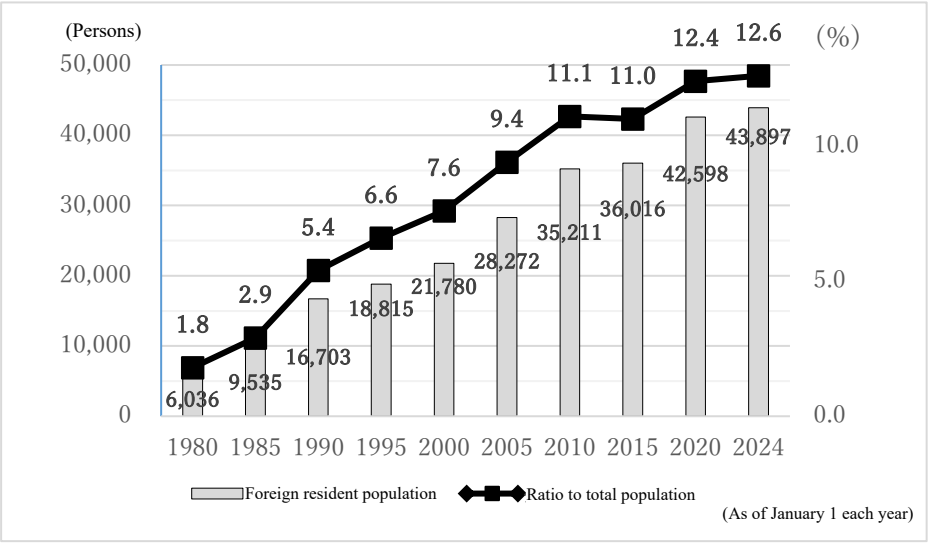
(5) Exchanges and Events	41
(6) Awareness of Multicultural Living	45
(7) Promoting Multicultural City Development	48
5. Walking Tour of the Okubo Area and Facility Tour (ninth meeting)	51
(1) Okubo Walking Tour.....	51
(2) Facility Tour (Okubo Chiiki Center and Okubo Library).....	54
 Chapter 4: Recommendations	 56
1. Discussions Based on the Survey Results	56
2. Fostering Awareness of Multicultural Living in the Community	60
3. Conclusion	62
 Reference	 63
List of the Six-Term Shinjuku City Multicultural City Development Conference Committee Members	63
(Reference) Recommendations Made in the Fifth-Term Shinjuku City Multicultural City Development Conference and City Policies.....	65

Chapter 1: Multicultural City Development

1. Foreign Residents in Shinjuku

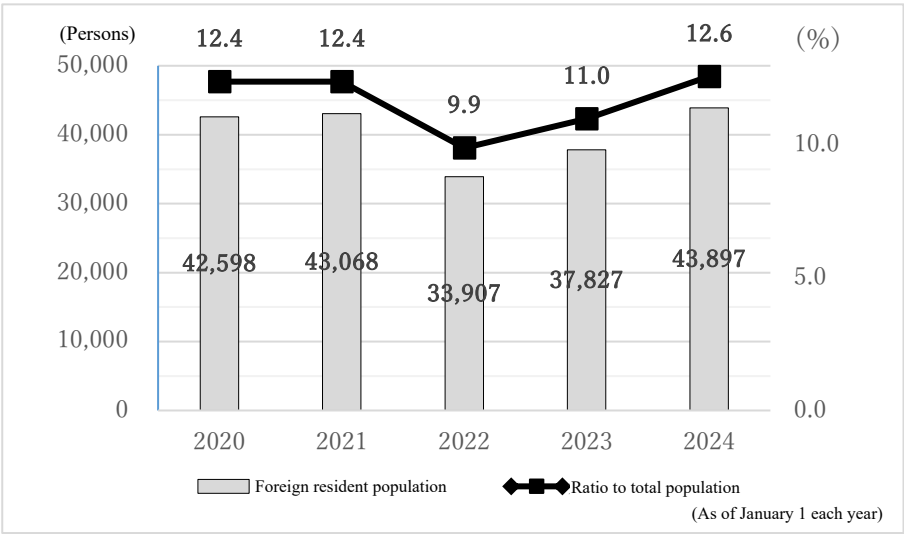
(1) Foreign Resident Population by the Numbers

The number of foreign residents living in Shinjuku started to rise during the late 1980s. There were approximately 6,000 in 1980, and the number had risen to approximately 44,000 in 2024. The proportion of foreign residents is also on the rise, reaching 12.6 percent in 2024.



(2) Population Changes Before and After the COVID-19 Pandemic

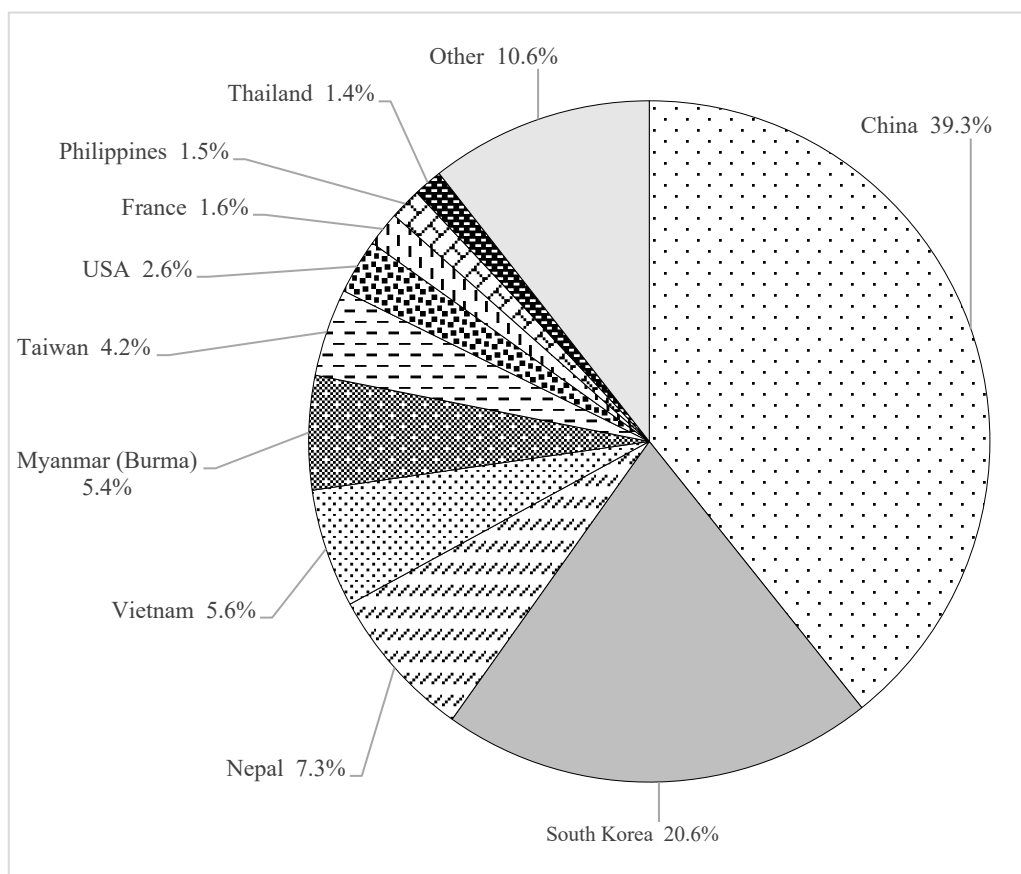
The number of foreign residents decreased to approximately 34,000 in 2022, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The number is on the rise again, however, and as of 2024 the foreign population had surpassed pre-pandemic levels.



(3) Population by Nationality

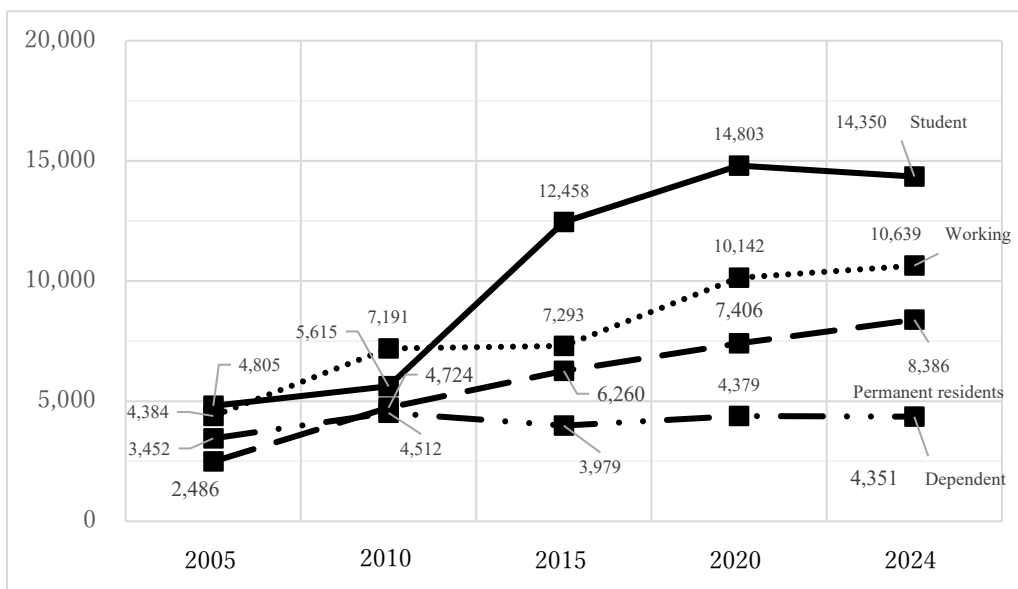
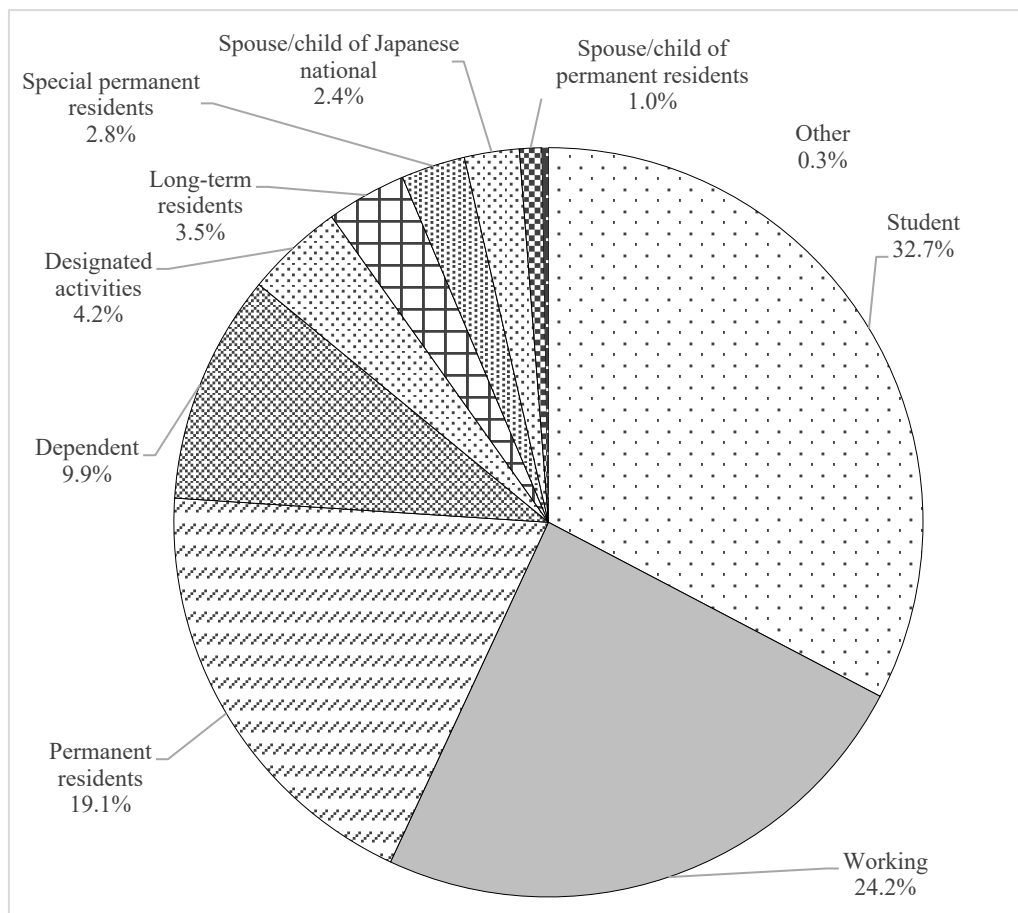
People from 135 countries/regions were living in Shinjuku as of January 1, 2024. The top ten by population is as follows:

Rank	Nationality	Population	Percentage of total foreign residents
1	China	17,240	39.3%
2	South Korea	9,021	20.6%
3	Nepal	3,183	7.3%
4	Vietnam	2,474	5.6%
5	Myanmar (Burma)	2,375	5.4%
6	Taiwan	1,829	4.2%
7	USA	1,145	2.6%
8	France	723	1.6%
9	Philippines	658	1.5%
10	Thailand	603	1.4%
—	Other	4,646	10.6%
		43,897	



(4) Population and Change in Population by Visa Status

By visa status as of January 1, 2024, foreign residents with student visas accounted for 32.7 percent (14,350 people), followed by those with working visas at 24.2 percent (10,639 people) and permanent residents at 19.1 percent (8,386 people).



(As of January 1 each year)

2. Multicultural Living Policies in Shinjuku City

(1) Japanese-Language Education Support

Opportunities for learning Japanese are provided so that Shinjuku City's foreign residents can lead stable lives in the community while communicating in Japanese.

① Japanese-language lessons Nihongo Hiroba

Mondays	Tuesdays	Thursdays	Saturdays
Kanji	Reading, Writing & Conversation	Beginners Conversation & Grammar	Conversation

② Shinjuku City Japanese-Language Classes (SJC)

The city offers 14 classes in 9 locations (Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza, Chiiki Centers, Yotsuya Hiroba, etc.).

③ Children's Japanese-Language Classes

Support for Japanese and other school subjects for students from the fourth grade in elementary school up to the third grade in junior high school.

④ Japanese-language classes for beginners

Intensive Japanese-language classes for people just beginning to learn Japanese.

⑤ Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza Japanese-Language Study Corner

A study space with materials and textbooks to learn Japanese.

(2) Consultation for Foreign Residents

This is a multi-language consultation service for foreign residents dedicated to helping them live comfortably and with peace of mind in Japan.

① Foreign Language Advisory Center (within the City Administration Information Center, Shinjuku City Office Main Bldg. 1F)

Hours: 9:30 a.m. to noon, 1 to 5 p.m.

Languages; English, Chinese, Korean

② Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza Foreign Resident Consultation Corner

Hours: 10 a.m. to noon, 1 to 5 p.m.

Languages; English, Chinese, Korean, Myanmar (Burmese), Thai, Nepali

(3) Supplying Multi-Language Support at Service Windows, Etc.

A tablet-based interpreting system is available at service windows, information desks, consultation services and the like to facilitate smooth communication between facility staff members and foreign residents.

Languages (17)	English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Thai, Filipino, French, Nepali, Hindi, Myanmar (Burmese), Russian, Indonesian, Cambodian, Malay, Ukrainian
----------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Locations (12)	Shinjuku City Office Main Bldg. and Shinjuku City Office Annex 1, Shinjuku City Office Annex 2 (including New Wings and Branch), Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza, Public Health Centers (four locations), Comprehensive Children's Center and Families with Children Support Centers (four locations)
----------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

(4) Disseminating Information to Foreign Residents

① Foreign-language bulletin: *Shinjuku News*

Content: Administrative information and other local news are published in multiple languages three times a year.

Languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Japanese (with *furigana*)

② *Information on Everyday Living for Foreign Residents of Shinjuku City*

Content: Preparing for Emergencies and Disasters; Notifications and Taxes; Insurance, Health Maintenance and Welfare; Employment and Status of Residence; Childbirth, Child-Raising, and Education; Living; Sports, Libraries, Learning, Museums; Useful Information

Languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Japanese (with *furigana*)

③ Information on Everyday Living for Foreign Residents website

Content: Administrative information and other local news, updated three times a month.

Languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Japanese

④ *Guide to Living in Shinjuku* (guidebook) and *Shinjuku Start Guide* (video)

Content: Offers advice on daily life manners, rules and other information in multiple languages (guidebook provided to new foreign residents of Shinjuku).

Languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Nepali, Myanmar (Burmese), Japanese (with *furigana*)

⑤ Foreign-language SNSs

Content: The city operates foreign-language versions of SNSs (X [formerly Twitter], Facebook, LINE and Weibo) as tools for quickly providing administrative information, news on everyday living and during disasters. This averages about 10 to 15 posts per month.

Languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Japanese

(5) Cultural Exchange Events

The city holds multicultural exchange events to provide regular opportunities for direct interaction between Japanese and foreign residents as a way to cultivate an awareness of multicultural living in the community.

The following events were held in FY2023:

Date and Event	Description
May 20, 2023 Okubo Satsuki Festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nepal, Vietnam: Trying on traditional clothing• Indonesia: Painting Balinese cat figurines
November 19, 2023 Shinjuku Kashiwa Festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nepal: Trying on traditional clothing, traditional dance• Vietnam: Trying on traditional clothing, calligraphy experience• Indonesia: Painting Balinese cat figurines• Arabic calligraphy experience• Peru: Traditional dance
March 10, 2024 Yotsuya Fureai Festival	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indonesia: Painting Balinese cat figurines
March 30, 2024 Fun and Delicious Cultural Exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• France: Cultural exchange, cooking experience

(6) Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza

Shinjuku City established the Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza to promote interaction between Japanese and foreign residents, deepen mutual understanding of culture and history, and help create a community in which people from diverse cultures can live together in harmony.

In addition, the city operates the Shinjuku City Multicultural Council. This body is made up of the user groups and organizations of the Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza, and serves as a network between local residents and activity groups. (The council holds six meetings a year, at which participating groups report on their activities and offer presentations on various topics.)

- ① Closed: Second and fourth Wednesdays of the month
December 29 to January 3 of the following year
- ② Hours: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
- ③ Facility information: Japanese-language Study Corner, Reference and Information Corner, Foreign Resident Advisory Corner, Multipurpose Space

Chapter 2: Discussion Themes

1. Theme for the Sixth Term

Fostering Awareness of Multicultural Living in the Community

2. Background and Reasons

Shinjuku City established the Shinjuku City Multicultural City Development Conference in September 2012 as an organization affiliated with the mayor, and subsequently held five terms of the conference (two years per term). Past discussion themes included “Improving the Educational Environment for Children with Foreign Roots,” “Support System for Foreign Residents in Times of Disaster,” “Housing,” “Living,” “Further Promotion of Multiculturalism through the Use of Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza,” and “Establishment of a Local Community Built by Japanese and Foreign Residents Together.”

These past conferences generated recommendations regarding how to provide information to foreign residents, disseminate information about and improvement of consultation services and Japanese-language learning support, and upgrade the Multicultural Plaza’s functions. This input has been reflected in city policies.

Although proposals related to fostering awareness of multicultural living were adopted in Item 6 in the fourth-term recommendations and Item 3 (1) in the fifth-term recommendations, this has never been the main theme for discussion at our conference. We believe that fostering an awareness of multicultural living in the community is essential to make the city’s multicultural living policies more effective. Furthermore, the results of the FY2023 Survey on Multicultural Living in Shinjuku City would be available for discussion during this term, making it possible for us to ascertain the city’s current status. This was a great opportunity to discuss how to foster an awareness of multicultural living in the community.

With all that in mind, the main theme for the sixth term was set as “Fostering Awareness of Multicultural Living in the Community.”

3. Discussion Items

- Review of the Survey on Multicultural Living in Shinjuku City
- Establish a common concept of what “awareness of multicultural living in the community” means
- Discussion based on survey results

4. Discussion Format

Plenary

Chapter 3: Progress of Discussions

1. How Discussions Proceeded

Since the Survey on Multicultural Living in Shinjuku City was scheduled to be implemented in FY2023, the sixth-term conference discussed the items (questions and answer options, etc.) in the survey. We decided to use the interim and final results of the survey as a basis for discussions on fostering awareness of multicultural living.

The content of the discussions for each session was as follows:

Session Date		Meeting No.	Main Discussion Points
2022	October 25 (Tue.)	First plenary meeting	Committee appointment; conference operations
	December 7 (Wed.)	Second plenary meeting	Discussion of survey items
2023	March 15 (Wed.)	Third plenary meeting	Discussion of survey items
	June 13 (Tue.)	Fourth plenary meeting	Review of survey items; past recommendations and responses
	July 26 (Wed.)	Fifth plenary meeting	Fostering awareness of multicultural living
	October 20 (Fri.)	Sixth plenary meeting	Survey (interim results) Fostering awareness of multicultural living
	December 22 (Fri.)	Seventh plenary meeting	Fostering awareness of multicultural living
2024	February 6 (Tue.)	Eighth plenary meeting	Survey (final results) Fostering awareness of multicultural living
	March 21 (Thu.)	Ninth plenary meeting	Tour of Okubo area Fostering awareness of multicultural living
	May 22 (Wed.)	Tenth plenary meeting	Recommendations (first draft)
	July 3 (Wed.)	Eleventh plenary meeting	Recommendations (draft)
	July 22 (Mon.)	Twelfth plenary meeting	Report submitted

2. Discussion of Survey Items (meetings two through four)

Since the city was planning the Survey on Multicultural Living in FY2023, the sixth-term Shinjuku City Multicultural City Development Conference decided to discuss implementation methods and survey items.

The major opinions of committee members, the city's response, and an overview of the survey are as follows:

(1) Major opinions and the city's response

Opinion	City Response
The previous survey's target was limited to people aged twenty and over. However, since many international students are aged 18 and 19, setting the survey's target at 18 and over would be better.	Survey target changed to eighteen and over.
The ages of the children each survey respondent has are different, such as infants and toddlers, elementary schoolchildren and junior high school children, etc. To understand the situation in detail through cross-tabulation, it would be better to update the survey choices related to children's age groups to make it more specific.	The age category was changed to add more detail.
Many foreign residents experience issues during financial institution procedures. "Bank" should be added as an option under the question item "problems or dissatisfaction living in Japan."	"Financial institution procedures (banks, post offices, etc.)" was added as an option.
For items such as "problems or dissatisfaction living in Japan" and "prejudice and discrimination," a free response section should be added to gain a detailed understanding of the situation.	Free response section added.
To promote the use of the Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza, the functions, address, telephone number and other information about the Plaza should be disseminated to residents along with the survey.	Introduced the Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza in the survey form and enclosed related materials.
Since the foreign population is also aging, "old age, nursing care" should be added as an option under the item "problems or dissatisfaction living in Japan."	"Old age, nursing care" added as an option.
The past survey had a question asking about whether the respondent had "any problems concerning the Japanese language." The survey should also ask how they deal with those problems.	Survey question added.
Under the question about exchange events they wish to participate in, for future reference it would be a good idea to ask whether they prefer face-to-face or online events.	Survey option added.
Cross-tabulation should be used to extract more in-depth survey	Cross-tabulation

results.	(nationality, age, period of residence, etc.) added.
----------	------------------------------------------------------

In addition to the above, committee members provided opinions on how to make the survey items and options easier to understand, and how to improve the enclosed flyers that introduce city facilities and the city's initiatives for promoting multicultural living. The city revised the survey wording based on the committee members' opinions, and also considered other changes such as including a 2D code on the flyers so that people could easily access the city website.

(2) Overview of the implementation of the Survey on Multicultural Living

① Purpose of the survey

The survey was conducted to gain a better understanding of the issues in daily life and current state of interaction between Japanese and foreign residents living in the community, and to obtain basic data for the consideration and promotion of future multicultural living policies.

② Survey implementation entity

Shinjuku City

③ Survey overview

Item	Description	
Survey area	All of Shinjuku City	
Period	August 1 (Tue.) to 28 (Mon.), 2023	
Subject	Foreign resident survey	5,000 city residents aged 18 and over
	Japanese resident survey	2,000 city residents aged 18 and over
Subject selection	Randomly selected from the basic resident register	
Survey method	Sent via postal mail; collected via postal mail or online	

Note: Foreign residents received a survey form in Japanese (with *furigana*) along with a foreign-language version based on their nationality. The online version was also available in multiple languages as follows:

Chinese, Korean, English, Nepali, Vietnamese, Myanmar (Burmese), French, Thai

	Surveys sent (persons)	Valid responses (persons)	Valid response rate (%)
Foreign residents	5,000	1,024	21.2
Japanese residents	2,000	751	38.4

Note: When calculating the valid response rate, the denominator was the number of surveys sent minus the number of invalid responses.

Please visit the city website for the survey result report.

https://www.city.shinjuku.lg.jp/tabunka/tabunka01_002063_00001.html

Reference

Comparing “the percentage of nationalities of foreign residents in Shinjuku City as of January 1, 2024 (top 5)” and “the percentage of nationalities of survey respondents.” (%)

	China	South Korea	Nepal	Vietnam	Myanmar
Nationalities of foreign residents (as of January 1, 2024)	39.3	20.6	7.3	5.6	5.4
Nationalities of survey respondents	38.0	19.7	4.4	3.6	4.8

Comparison of “the percentage of status of residence of foreign residents in Shinjuku City as of January 1, 2024 (top 5)” and “the percentage of status of residence of survey respondents” (%)

	Student	Working	Permanent resident	Dependent	Designated activities
Status of residence of foreign residents (as of January 1, 2024)	32.7	24.2	19.1	9.9	4.2
Status of residence of survey respondents	27.0	30.8	19.1	6.5	1.3

3. Establish a Common Concept of “Awareness of Multicultural Living in the Community” (fourth and fifth meetings)

To advance the discussion on the sixth term’s chosen theme, “Fostering Awareness of Multicultural Living in the Community,” committee members must have a common concept of “fostering awareness of multicultural living.”

For this reason, we decided to start with confirming how multicultural living was positioned in the city’s ordinances and plans, and to organize the parts related to fostering awareness of multicultural living in the recommendations that the conferences of the previous terms proposed.

Our discussion was then based on the results of the 2023 Survey on Multicultural Living, and we compiled recommendations on fostering awareness of multicultural living.

(1) “Multicultural living” stipulated in the Shinjuku City Basic Autonomy Ordinance

The Shinjuku City Basic Autonomy Ordinance is a set of basic rules for autonomy that consider Shinjuku City’s regional characteristics. It sets out the rights and responsibilities of city residents, the council and the city mayor, as well as the principles for the city administration.

The preamble to the ordinance describes the regional characteristics of Shinjuku City, including its history and culture, and it also mentions “multicultural living.” Committee members affirmed the description in the preamble to establish a common concept of “multicultural living,” according to the city.

Reference

Excerpt from the Shinjuku City Basic Autonomy Ordinance

(Preamble)

Located in the heart of the nation’s capital, Tokyo, our city Shinjuku continues to change each day and shows a great presence as a dynamic international city, where people from home and abroad with various purposes gather and live together.

Shinjuku is also a city of valuable histories and cultures established by people who worked strenuously.

We are striving for the realization of a multicultural society to appreciate the diversity of each citizen with the people gathered from across the world, as well as to pass down the tremendous history and cultures of the city beyond the generations. With an aim to express our determination in creating the local government that lies firmly at the foundation of the citizen’s individual thoughts, we herein establish the ordinance as the supreme norms of Shinjuku._

(2) “Multicultural living” in the Shinjuku City Comprehensive Plan

The Shinjuku City Comprehensive Plan is the city’s top-level plan. It sets out the direction of medium- to long-term administrative policies, including health and welfare, community, disaster preparedness, urban planning, and culture and tourism.

The committee members affirmed the direction of the city’s efforts regarding multicultural living based on the description of a specific measure, “Promoting Multicultural Urban Planning,” in the Comprehensive Plan.

Reference

Excerpt from the Shinjuku City Comprehensive Plan

Individual Action 15

Promote multicultural urban development

Our vision:

We aspire to be a multicultural city, where people of different nationalities, ethnicities and other backgrounds respect each other's cultural differences and each one can be an active member of the local community.

Policy direction

- Promote initiatives that enable Japanese and foreign residents to live stable lives in the community and proactively participate in community development by taking advantage of various opportunities, such as the Shinjuku City Multicultural City Development Conference, where Japanese and foreign residents discuss issues related to city development and the Shinjuku City Multicultural Council, a network of various organizations.
- Reexamine the nature of exchange projects and collaboration with other organizations to enhance the system for promoting multicultural city development, and enhance the functions of the exchange base, Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza.

(3) Establishing a common concept of “fostering awareness of multicultural living”

The committee members reviewed the sections related to fostering awareness of multicultural living in the report recommendations of previous terms, and picked up and organized keywords such as “exchange” and “cooperation” to establish a common image of the concept.

Image

Fostering awareness of multicultural living in the

The necessary elements include exchange, cooperation, community, language, greetings, conversation, events, culture, foreign resident participation, acceptance by Japanese residents, mutual understanding, eliminating prejudice/discrimination, disseminating information, etc.

4. Discussions Based on the Survey Results (sixth to eleventh meetings)

As stated in the previous section, at the meetings we established a common concept of fostering awareness of multicultural living, and held discussions based on the results of the Survey on Multicultural Living.

In this section we have sorted and organized the opinions of the committee members, and posted the data obtained from the survey results that can be used as reference materials. The recommendations we produced are based on this information.

(1) Living in Japan

① Problems and dissatisfactions

For Q10 of the survey asking foreign residents about problems or dissatisfactions living in Japan, “language” was the most common response at over 25 percent, followed by “lack of friends.” On the other hand, “none in particular” was also close to 25 percent.

The committee members commented that the fact many foreign residents answered that they lacked friends indicated they wanted a stronger connection with the local community.

There were also opinions on specific issues, such as the difficulty of renting housing and aging.

To resolve the problems of foreign residents to some extent, it is vital to help them learn Japanese, promote understanding in the real estate industry, and encourage interactions to prevent foreign residents from becoming isolated.

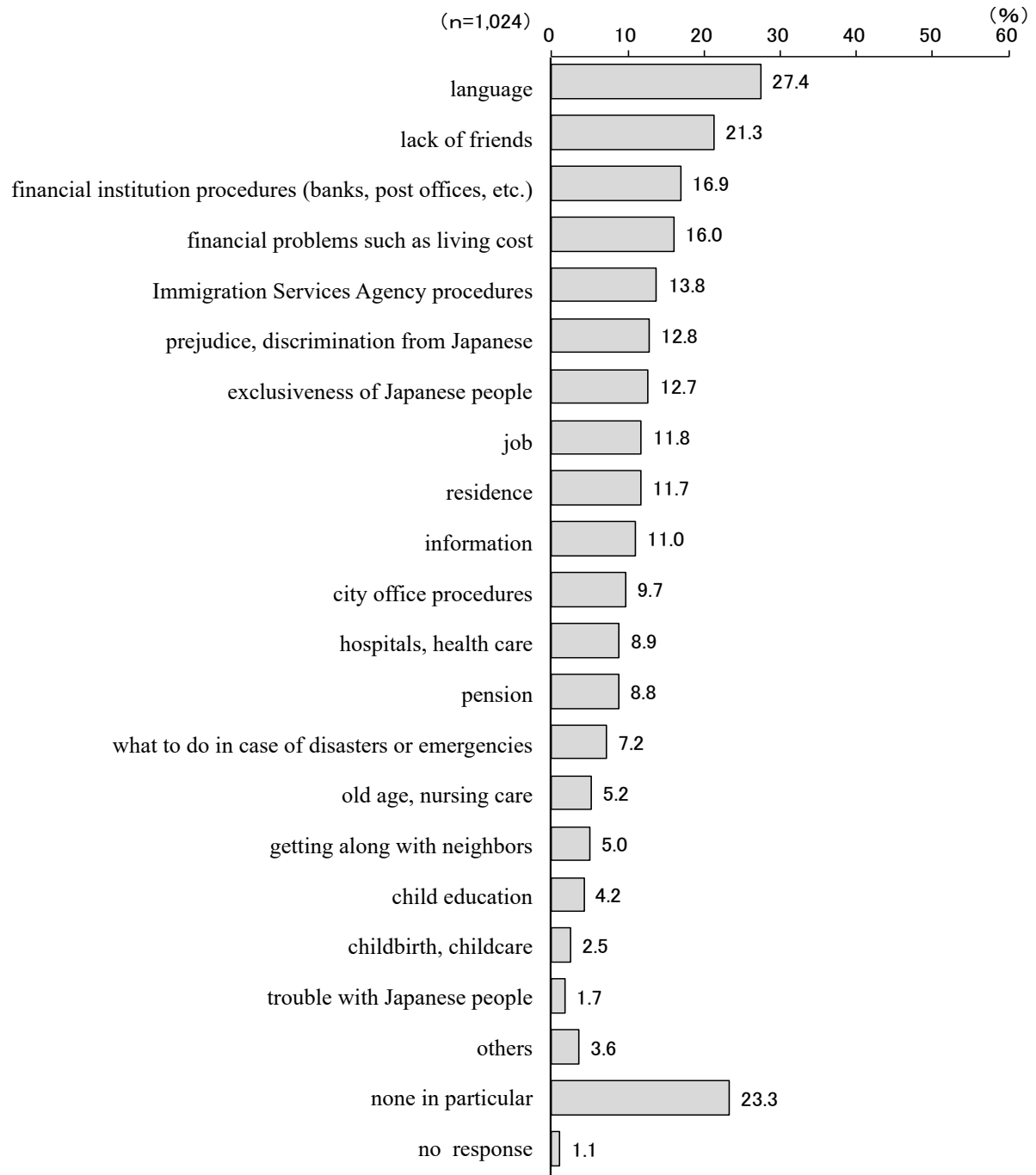
(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

- Many foreign residents responded that they lack friends. I think we can say that a typical foreign resident in Japan wants some kind of connection with the local community.
- Many foreign residents who have just arrived in Japan have issues related to obtaining housing and getting a credit card.
- The aging of the foreign population is a concern. For example, compared to those from a country with a large community in Japan, such as South Korea, someone from a country with a small presence in Japan tends to become isolated and lonely when becoming old.
- In Japan, taxes and insurance premiums are based on the previous year’s income. This can be confusing for some foreigners, so it may be a good idea to teach them to save some money for next year’s payments as soon as possible.

Survey for foreign residents Q10

Do you or your family have any problems or dissatisfactions living in Japan?

(Circle as many as you like.)



② Relationships with neighbors

The survey asked about relationships with neighbors. In Q12 of the survey for foreign residents, just over 40 percent responded “yes,” while just over 55 percent responded “no.” In addition, Q12-1 asked about the extent of the relationship, and almost 45 percent responded that they only exchange greetings.

For Q13 of the survey for Japanese residents, about 45 percent answered that they currently have no relationships with foreign residents. For the question regarding their hopes about this, about 25 percent answered they want to “exchange greetings,” while about 20 percent responded that they want to “help each other in need.”

Q11 of the survey for foreign residents asked which language they prefer to use when talking to Japanese people. Almost 90 percent responded that they prefer Japanese.

On the other hand, for Q12-2 of the survey for Japanese residents—“reasons for not talking to foreign residents”—while the most common response was “no opportunity to speak to them,” other responses included “cannot speak foreign languages,” “don’t understand the other person’s language,” “don’t know if they understand Japanese,” and “I hesitate trying to talk to them.”

This shows that opportunities for interactions may increase if Japanese residents speak slowly to foreign residents in simple Japanese instead of forcing themselves to use a foreign language.

Committee members gave their opinions regarding specific cases, such as how the Japanese residents in their community feel close to the foreign residents and examples of when Japanese residents speak to foreign residents.

On the other hand, one opinion was that because of the city’s urban environment, relationships—not just between Japanese and foreign residents—are becoming weaker.

For local residents to build open relationships with each other and live comfortably and safely in their community will require energizing the local community.

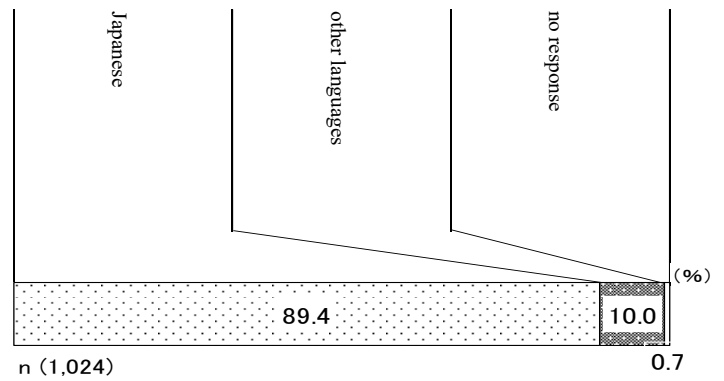
(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

- There are many foreign residents and a lot of foreign culture in the Okubo area. In the past, some people had negative feelings toward foreign cultures, but that has changed in recent years.
- I clean the area around my train station. Japanese people have spoken to me, a foreigner, and said things such as “Thank you” and “Let’s do it together next time,” which made a really good impression on me.

- Being in Tokyo, many people don't pay much attention to their surroundings. I feel distant from both foreign and Japanese people.
- Even before adding foreign residents to the equation, the relationships between the Japanese people who live here are becoming weaker.

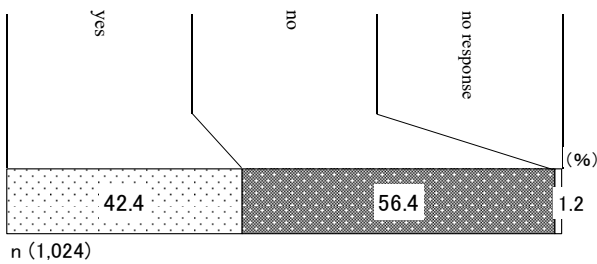
Survey for foreign residents Q11

Which language do you prefer to use when talking to Japanese people?



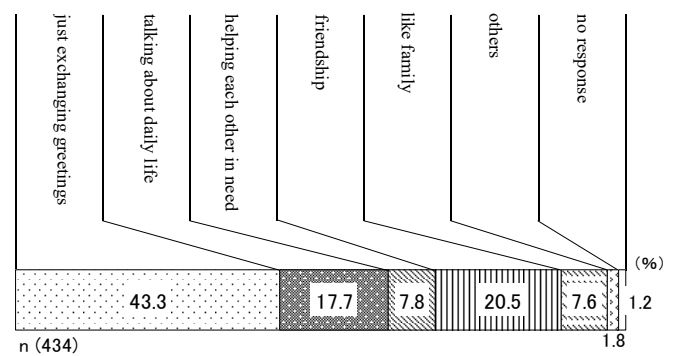
Survey for foreign residents Q12

Do you have a relationship with your Japanese neighbors?



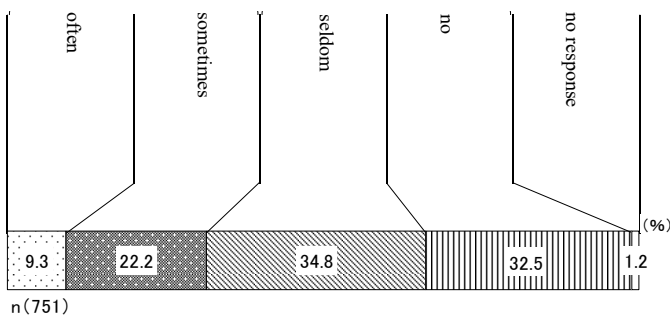
Survey for foreign residents Q12-1

What kind of a relationship is it?



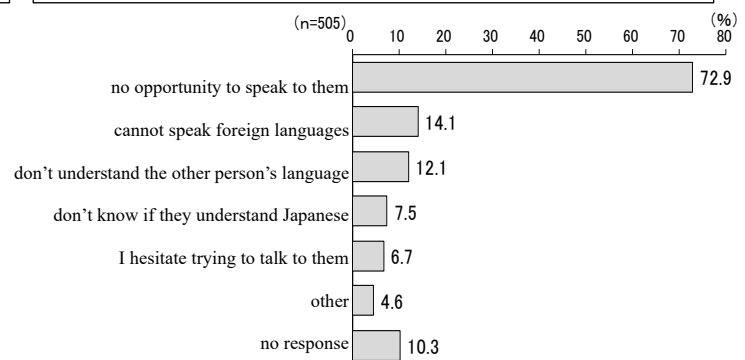
Survey for Japanese residents Q12

Do you have the opportunity to speak with foreign people in your daily life?



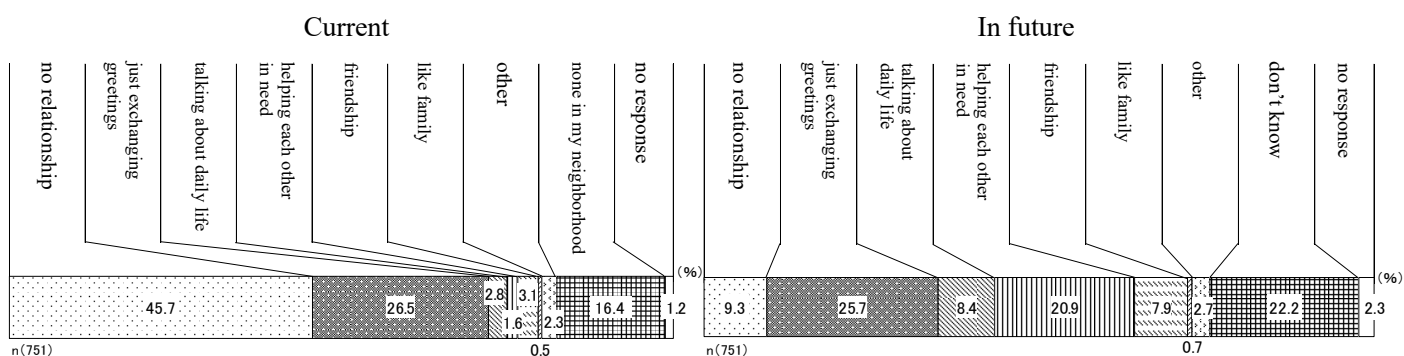
Survey for Japanese residents Q12-2

What is the reason you do not speak to foreign people?



Survey for Japanese residents Q13

What kind of relationship do you have with foreign neighbors? What kind of relationship would you like to build in the future?



③ Conditions and image in the community

Q9 of the survey for Japanese residents asked how they felt about foreign residents living in Japan. Close to 40 percent responded “favorable” or “somewhat favorable.” The percentage of those who responded “favorable” was higher than the previous survey, and significantly exceeded the percentage of those who responded “not favorable.”

Committee members commented that it was wonderful to see “favorable” and “somewhat favorable” responses increase from the previous survey.

These results show that Japanese residents are accepting foreign residents, and that the presence of foreign residents in their community has become a common sight for them.

Q10 of the survey for Japanese residents asked how they feel about foreign residents living in their neighborhood. While some had concerns about foreign residents following rules and manners for garbage disposal, noise and the like, there were also positive responses, such as more opportunities to come into contact with foreign cultures and eat foreign foods.

Committee members commented on the conditions and image of the Okubo area, for example, saying things like “it’s lively,” “it’s become brighter,” and “you can feel the foreign culture there.”

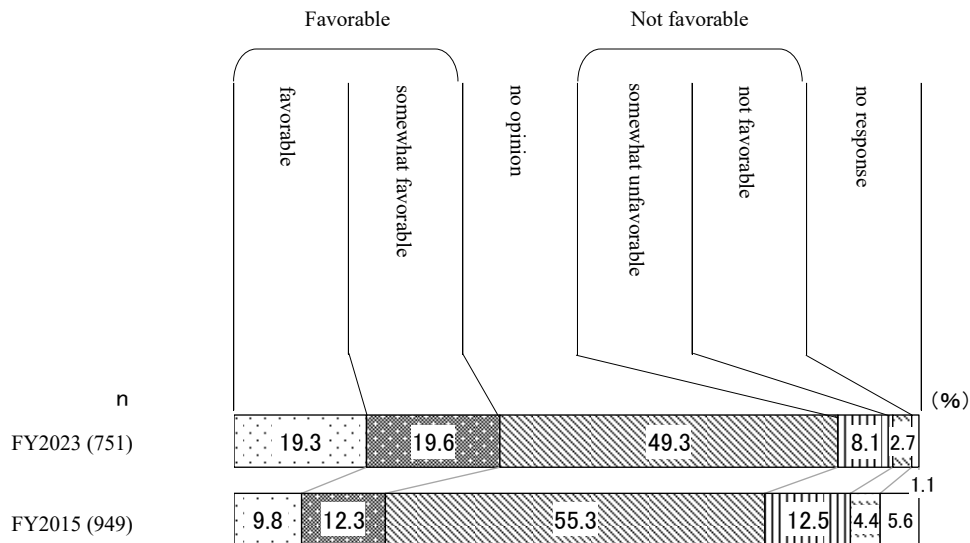
Overall, the impression is good, and the community seems to be accepting foreign cultures and multicultural city development is progressing.

(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

- It is wonderful that the percentage of “favorable” and “somewhat favorable” is increasing for the survey question “How do you feel about foreign residents living in your neighborhood?” I don’t think the results would’ve been the same in other municipalities.
- I used to be surprised when stores had foreign staff members, but now it feels normal. Since foreign staff members can do their jobs and understand the language, it doesn’t even cross my mind that they are not Japanese.
- I heard there have been issues regarding garbage disposal and noise.
- Thinking about Okubo made me realize how full of vitality it is.
- Okubo seems brighter than before.
- I felt that I didn’t need to go overseas to experience foreign culture.
- Okubo used to be a residential area with shopping streets, but it’s suddenly became a tourist attraction. There was some confusion, but the community worked with ingenuity.

Survey for Japanese residents Q9

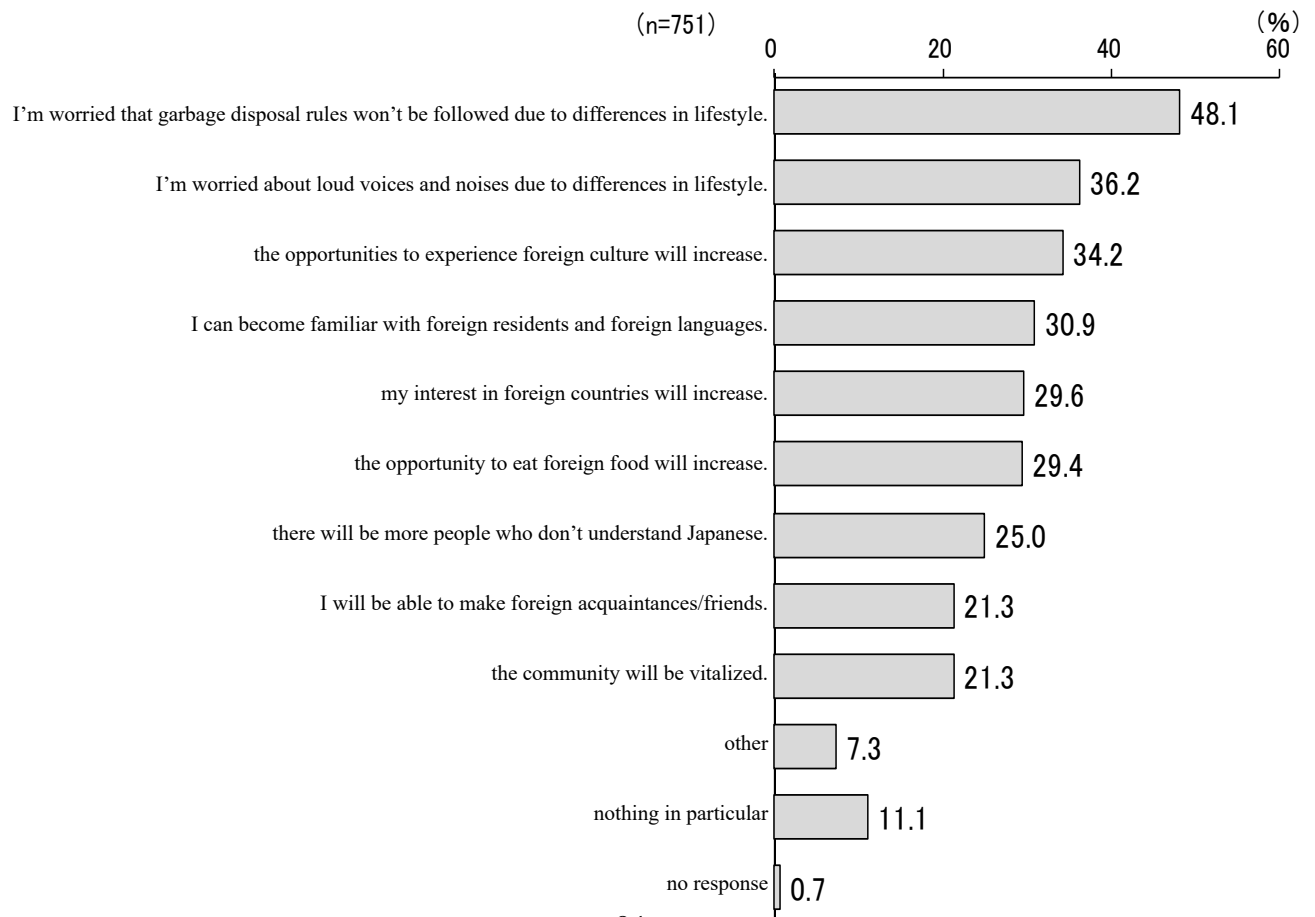
How do you feel about foreign residents living in Japan?



Survey for Japanese residents Q10

How do you feel about foreign residents of various nationalities living in your neighborhood?

(Circle as many as you like.)



④ Trouble (rules and manners in daily life)

Q15 of the survey for both Japanese and foreign residents asked about troubles they'd experienced with Japanese/foreign neighbors. The most popular response for both was "none in particular."

Regarding this result, one committee member said that it was because Japanese residents are now more familiar with foreign residents. On the other hand, another opinion was that there are no problems because Japanese and foreign residents do not interact with each other in the first place.

In addition to mentioning trouble related to noise and garbage disposal, some committee members said that it would be good to learn about Japanese culture and manners through events and other forms of interaction to avoid problems, and that the community should have a support system to help foreign residents understand the rules and manners of daily life.

Based on these opinions, we believe it is essential to raise awareness among foreign residents about the rules and manners for daily life—such as noise and garbage disposal—through community-wide initiatives involving local communities and activity groups, as well as through city office measures such as booklets, leaflets and websites.

Furthermore, by creating opportunities for Japanese and foreign residents to interact and learn about each other's lifestyles and rules and manners, we believe it is possible to build strong relationships based on mutual understanding._

(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

- The survey shows that there are no problems because there are not enough regular interactions.
- Living in Tokyo allows you to maintain your distance with neighbors, so you can get along without running into trouble. It doesn't matter whether you're Japanese or a foreign resident.
- Many Japanese people responded "none in particular" regarding trouble, so I felt that Japanese people are becoming used to foreign people.
- Foreign residents who are busy with work have fewer opportunities to study Japanese or the rules, and this can lead to problems.
- I heard there has been trouble regarding noise and garbage disposal.
- If we want to live in Japan, we foreign residents have no choice but to understand how life works here.
- I think that simply telling Japanese people to "kindly teach the foreign residents in your neighborhood" would reduce problems and friction.
- I believe there should be a support system where the community helps foreign residents

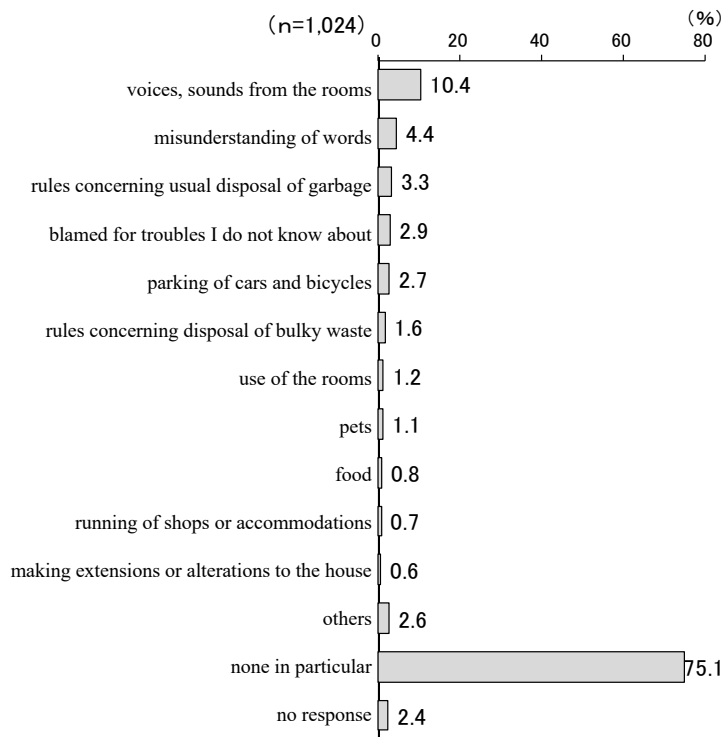
follow with rules and manners.

- When foreign residents work with Japanese people on events, it's an opportunity to learn about Japanese rules and customs. There should be more such opportunities for interactions.
- It's difficult to learn all the daily life rules and manners from a pamphlet. If foreign residents can interact with Japanese people, we can learn about them through conversation, which is easier to remember.
- By interacting and becoming friendly with Japanese people, it becomes easier to talk about various issues.

Survey for foreign residents Q15

Have you had any troubles such as those listed below with your Japanese neighbors?

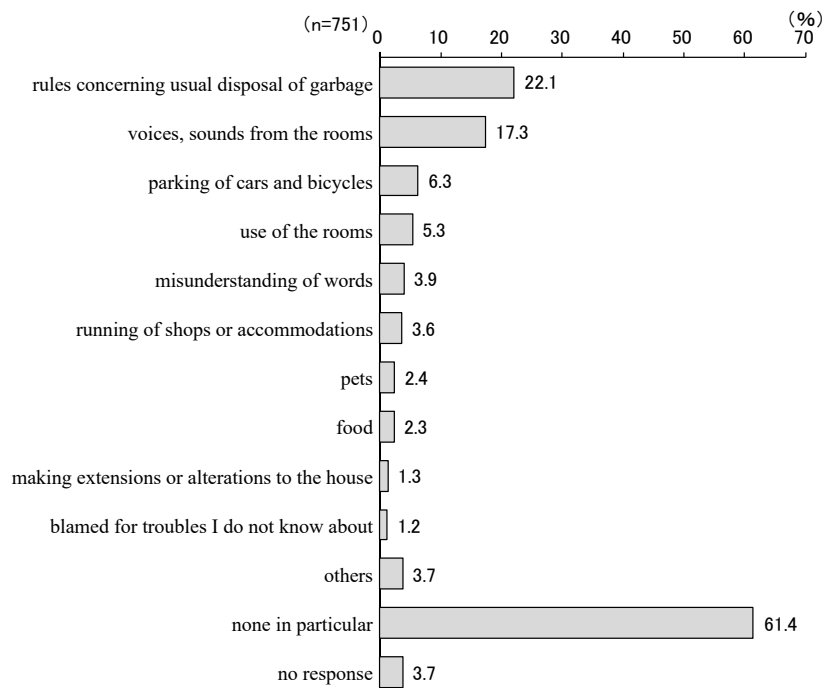
(Circle as many as you like.)



Survey for Japanese residents Q15

Have you had any problems such as those listed below with your foreign neighbors?

(Circle as many as you like.)



⑤ Prejudice and discrimination

Q16 of the survey for foreign residents asked if they have ever felt prejudice or discrimination. Over 35 percent responded “sometimes”; those who answered “rarely” also accounted for around 35 percent. When asked in Q16-1 about specific situations, the most common response (at nearly 55 percent) was “looking for a room to rent.”

There were many different comments from committee members: it is difficult for foreign people to find rooms to rent because of the policies some apartment owners have; some foreign residents actually do not follow the rules, making it more difficult to find apartments available for foreign people; and foreign residents need to try harder to understand Japanese customs and integrate into the local community. For this reason, we believe it is essential for both Japanese and foreign residents to be aware that they are part of the same community. To that end—in addition to changing the perceptions of Japanese renters—foreign residents must abide by the rules.

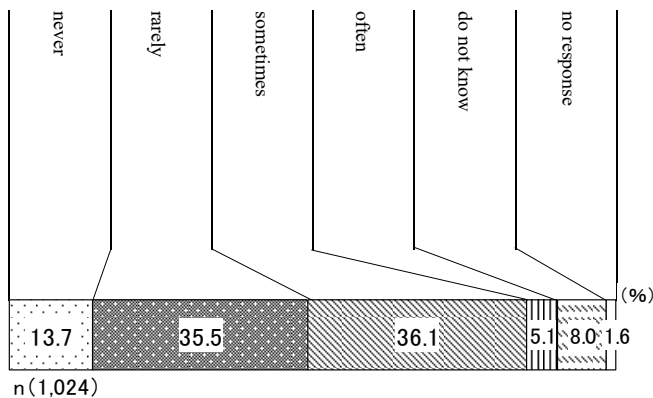
The surveys also asked about what is necessary to eliminate prejudice and discrimination (Q17 in both). For both Japanese and foreign residents, the most common response was “knowing the culture of the other,” at just over 50 percent. Because the percentage of responses that cited “knowing the culture of the other” and “recognizing the difference in customs” was high for both Japanese and foreign residents, we believe it is vital to create opportunities to introduce and experience each other’s cultures, and to promote deeper mutual understanding.

(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

- As a foreign national, I’ve felt discrimination when looking for a room to rent.
- Since many apartment owners are elderly, it takes time to change their perceptions.
- To eliminate discrimination, it is essential for foreign residents to follow the rules and improve their reputation.
- Understanding the situations in which prejudice and discrimination is prevalent helps us see what is needed to foster an awareness of multicultural living.
- Interacting and becoming friendly with Japanese people makes it easier to talk about various issues.
- I’ve heard that prejudice and discrimination are increasing in local areas where there are many technical intern trainees. I think the relationship between Japanese and foreign residents in Shinjuku City is more solid because many foreign residents in Shinjuku are students, permanent residents, or those on a technical visa.

Survey for foreign residents Q16

Have you as a foreign resident ever felt being prejudiced or discriminated by Japanese in daily life?



Survey for foreign residents Q16-1

At what kind of situations did you feel prejudiced or discriminated?

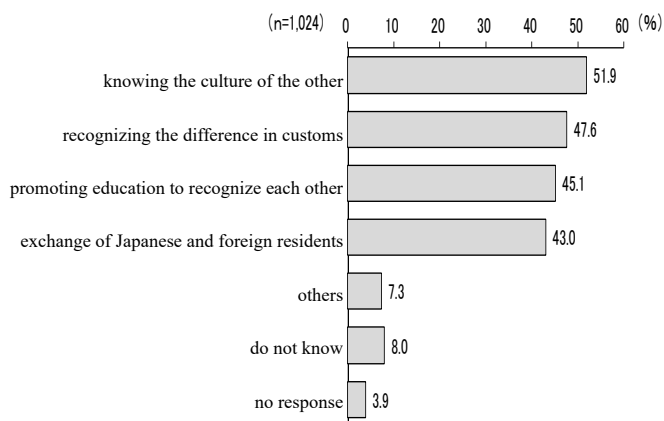
(Circle as many as you like.)



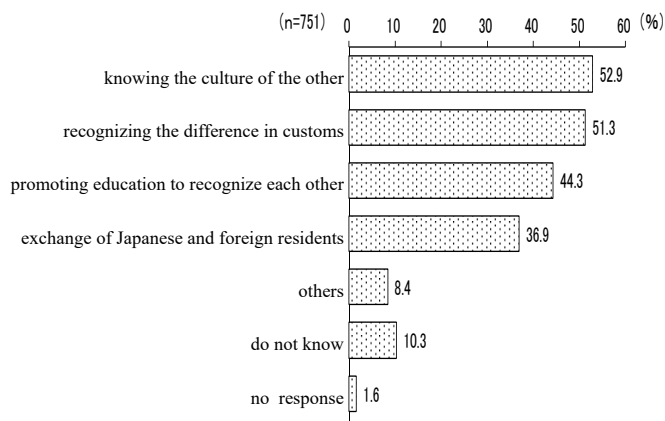
Survey for foreign residents Q17, survey for Japanese residents Q17

What do you think is necessary to eliminate prejudice or discrimination? (Circle as many as you like.)

Survey for foreign residents Q17



Survey for Japanese residents Q17



(2) Language (learning Japanese)

Q18 of the survey for foreign residents asked whether they have any problems concerning the Japanese language. The most common response was “sometimes,” at just over 30 percent, followed by “yes” at over 25 percent. For Q18-2 “How do you deal with problems concerning the Japanese language?” the most common response was “utilize interpretation/translation apps.”

Q19 asked foreign residents about their willingness to study Japanese. Over 50 percent answered “am learning now,” while nearly 30 percent responded “want to learn.” Q19-1 asked about study methods; “the Internet” was the most common response, followed by “Japanese-language schools.”

These results show that while foreign residents do encounter problems related to the Japanese language, they have a strong desire to learn it.

Committee members mentioned providing learning opportunities for people in various situations, such as the elderly, childrearing households, and people busy with work, as well as the use of IT technology. To summarize, there is a need to create an environment in which Japanese-language education is readily available to people of various generations, occupations and the like.

There were also comments: such as that learning about Japanese culture alongside the language is useful, and that participating in events, cleaning activities and other gatherings would provide more opportunities to speak Japanese.

We believe that creating opportunities to speak Japanese through interaction and exchange between Japanese and foreign residents is effective.

A committee member commented that even foreign residents who cannot speak Japanese can get by in their daily lives to a certain extent. Learning Japanese, which is the common language of the community, will help create a multicultural society in which residents of different nationalities and cultures live in mutual understanding. To this end, it is essential to support Japanese-language education of foreign residents as a community.

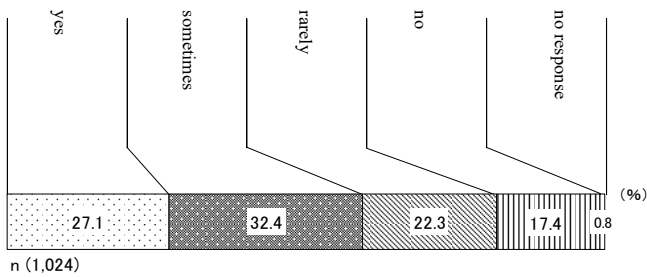
(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

- I think there will be more foreign residents whose visa status is “specified skilled worker.” The Japanese-language curriculum will have to be tailored to various educational backgrounds and career backgrounds.
- It’s not just young people who want to learn Japanese; people in their forties, fifties and sixties also have a desire to learn.

- Japanese-language classes should be accessible and easy to attend for people in all situations, including the elderly, childrearing households, and people who are busy with work.
- Many foreign residents answered that they use interpretation/translation apps when they encounter problems with the language. The use of IT for communication between Japanese and foreign residents will continue to increase.
- Learning about Japanese culture alongside the language is useful.
- If foreign residents can participate easily in events, cleaning activities and other gatherings, it will provide an opportunity to speak Japanese.
- Foreign residents in Japan are able to get by with daily life without speaking Japanese, so their Japanese never improves. Opportunities to learn the language should also be provided to such people.

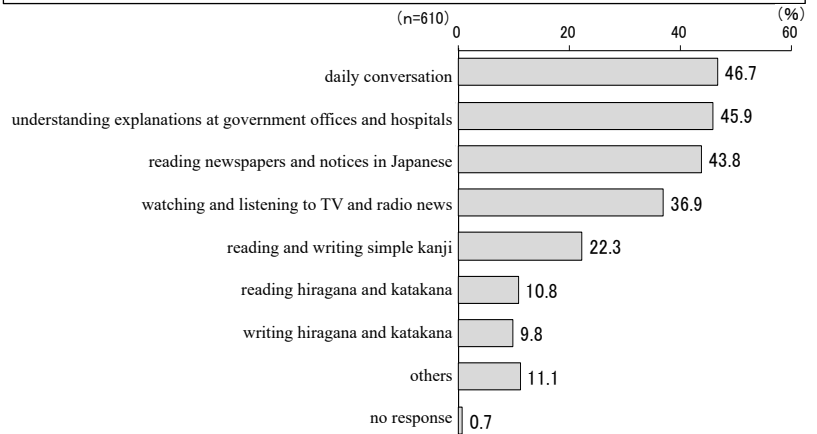
Survey for foreign residents Q18

Do you have any problems concerning the Japanese language?



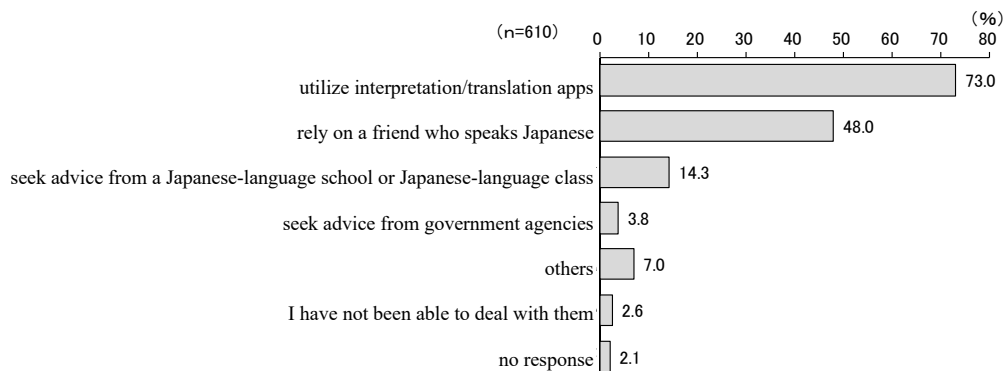
Survey for foreign residents Q18-1

What kind of problems are they?
(Circle as many as you like.)



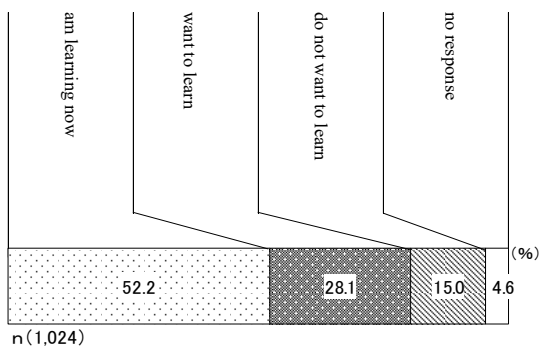
Survey for foreign residents Q18-2

How do you deal with problems concerning the Japanese language? (Circle as many as you like.)



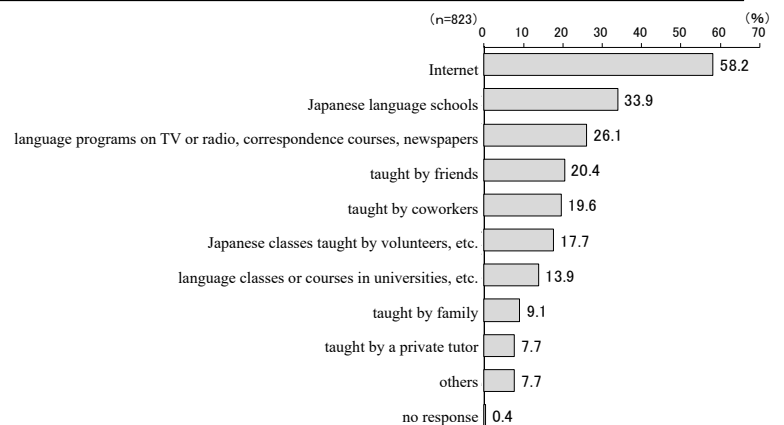
Survey for foreign residents Q19

Do you want to learn Japanese in the future?



Survey for foreign residents Q19-1

What kind of method of learning are you using? What kind of method would you like to use? (Circle as many as you like.)



(3) Disasters and Emergencies

Q20 of the survey for foreign residents asked about preparations they are making for disasters. Many responded that they are “storing food and drinking water” and “making sure where to evacuate from home and workplace.”

On the other hand, a significant number answered “none in particular.” When asked in Q20-1 why they had not prepared, the most common responses were “do not know how to prepare” and “never thought about it.”

The survey also asked what kinds of measures respondents would like to see Shinjuku City take (Q22 for foreign residents; Q18 for Japanese residents). For both foreign and Japanese residents, common responses were “describe the evacuation site signs in multiple languages,” “broadcast and guide in multiple languages,” and “distribute pamphlets about emergency preparation in multiple languages.”

The committee members expressed their opinions on providing information in various languages, such as multilingual disaster preparedness maps. This has reinforced the importance of raising awareness on a daily basis and providing information during disasters in multiple languages.

One member also suggested that it would be good for Japanese residents to call out to foreign residents in the neighborhood if a disaster occurs. To this end, it is vital for local residents to build ongoing open relationships and maintain a strong sense of mutual support within the community.

Furthermore, another member expects foreign residents to play roles in times of disaster. This indicates that there are high expectations within the community that foreign residents will play an important part in local disaster preparedness.

For this reason, it is vital for Japanese and foreign residents to work together and work as one to prepare for disasters.

(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

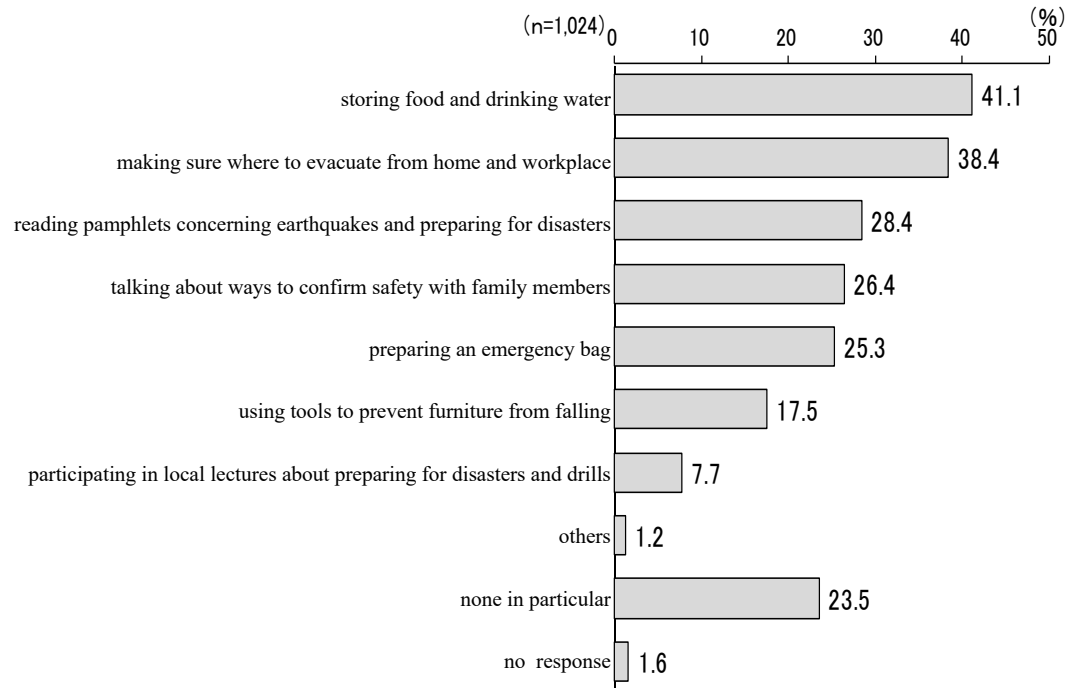
- Many foreign residents don’t know what to do when a disaster occurs.
- Police and fire department representatives explained the disaster preparedness map and actions to take if a disaster occurs at the Okubo Elderly Network Meeting, which was very useful.
- I hope disaster preparedness maps and other materials will be made available in multiple languages.
- In addition to distributing information to foreign residents in multiple languages, I think encouraging Japanese people to call out to their foreign neighbors and make efforts to evacuate

together will make a difference.

- I think it is important for young people to demonstrate their strength regardless of nationality, such as by helping the elderly in their neighborhood in times of disaster.

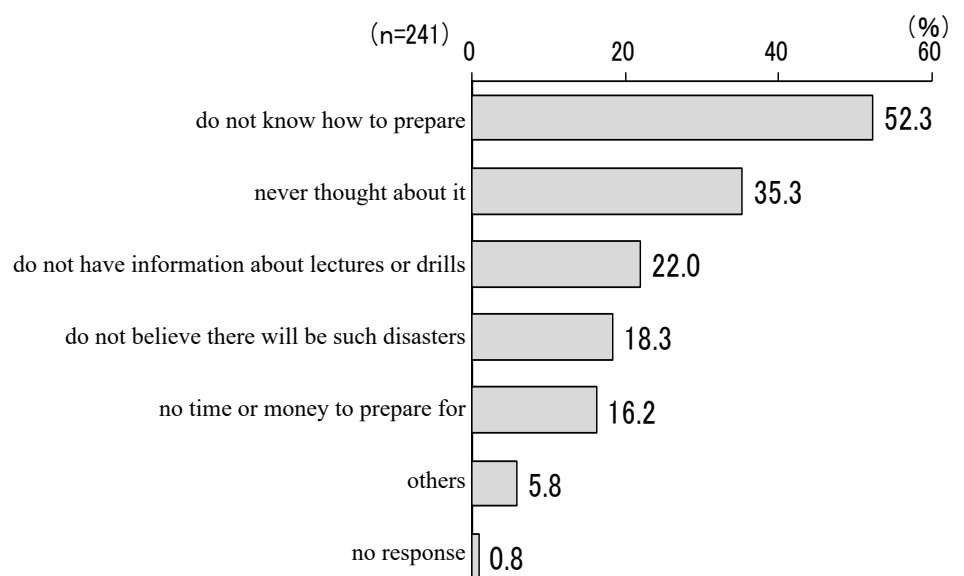
Survey for foreign residents Q20

How have you prepared for disasters such as earthquakes? (Circle as many as you like.)



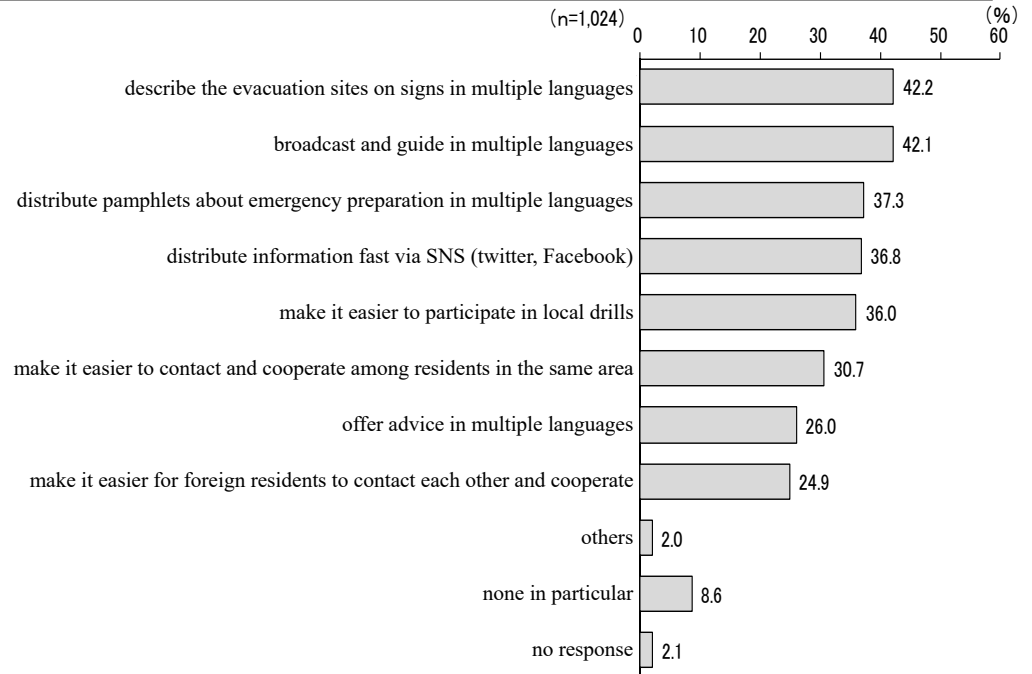
Survey for foreign residents Q20-1

Why have you not prepared? (Circle as many as you like.)



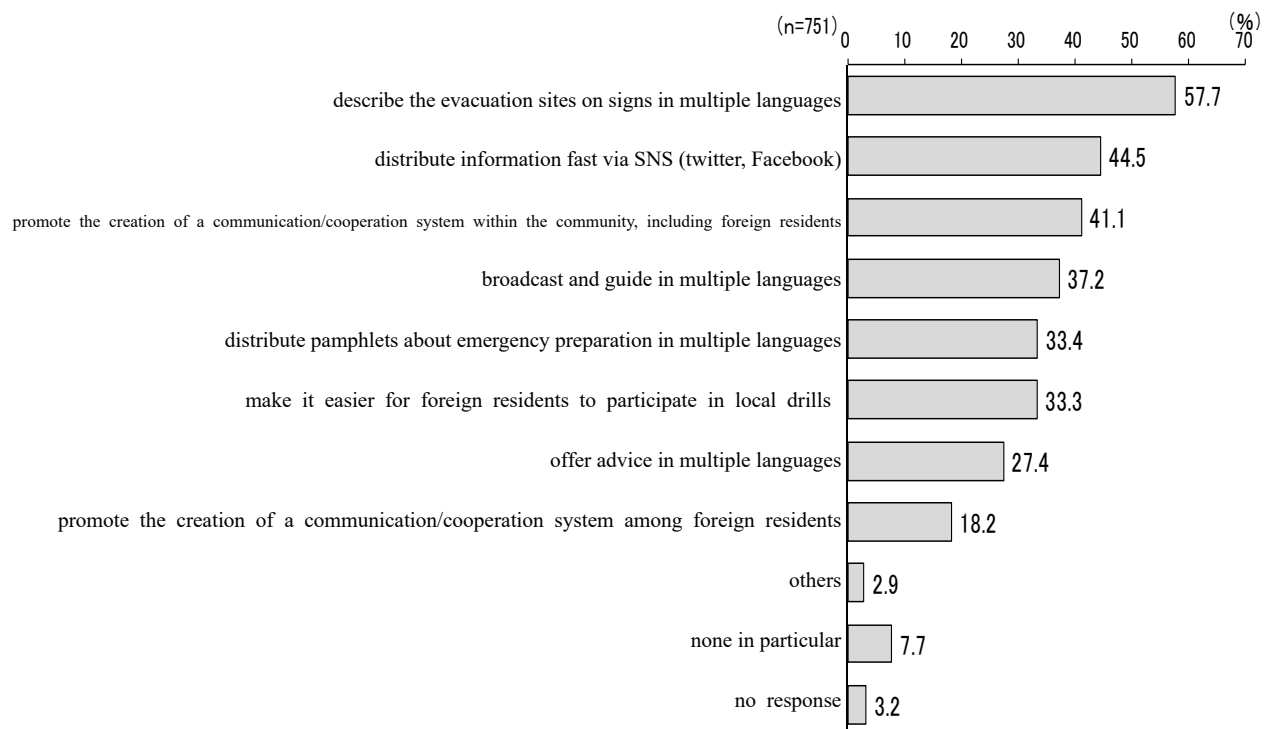
Survey for foreign residents Q22

What kind of measures would you like Shinjuku City to take in preparing for disasters? (Circle as many as you like.)



Survey for Japanese residents Q18

What kind of measures would you like Shinjuku City to take in preparing for disasters (including measures for foreign residents)? (Circle as many as you like.)



(4) Necessary Information

Q24 of the survey for foreign residents asked about information they would like to receive. “Events such as festivals, sports” was the most common response at nearly 43 percent, followed by “tax, pension,” “healthcare and health insurance,” “preparing for disasters and earthquakes” and “residence.”

Q25 asked to state their requests to the city to obtain information. The preferred methods were SNSs, email and the city’s website. The respondents who prefer information via paper media (bulletins, pamphlets, materials, etc.) were fewer than in the previous survey.

Committee members commented that even foreign residents who want to participate in events to interact with Japanese people do not receive the information they need. On the other hand, there were also comments about the difficulty of providing information to all residents, regardless of nationality, and that it is necessary for people to go out and gather information themselves.

The discussion also raised the importance of using various modern media, such as SNSs, in addition to multilingual flyers to disseminate information.

Shinjuku City provides bulletins, websites, videos and other materials in multiple languages to supply information. However, the results of Q23 of the survey for foreign residents revealed that the problem is that awareness of these services is still low and they are not used very often.

When providing information to foreign residents, it is necessary to provide them with the information that they want to know effectively, which involves using SNSs and websites. It is also time to review whether providing information in paper form still makes sense.

In addition, it is necessary to raise awareness of the ways the city provides information (bulletins, SNSs, websites) during the procedures for moving in, through foreign resident communities, etc.

(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

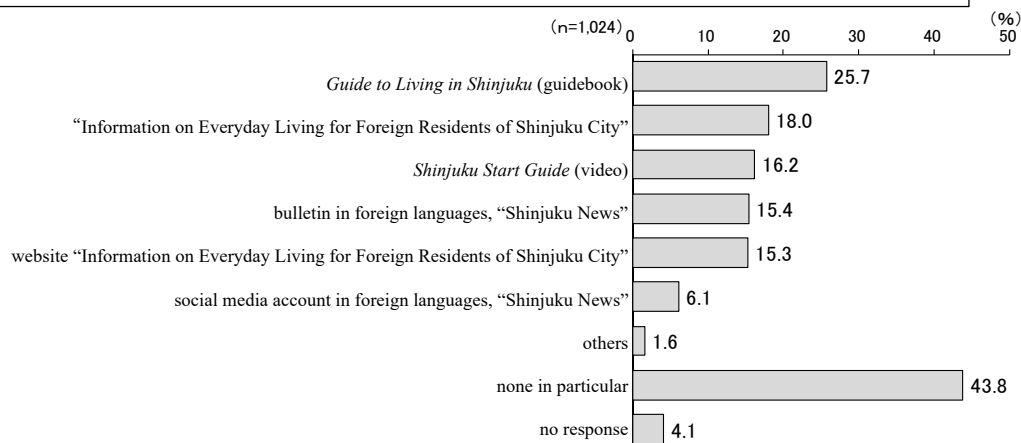
- Even if foreign residents want to interact with local people, they don’t have the necessary information.
- Even if foreign residents want to experience Bon dancing or Japanese cooking, the information never reaches them.
- There is a great deal of event information available, but it doesn’t reach the foreign residents.
- In addition to nationality, if we consider different generations, it is difficult to provide

everybody with all the information.

- In this day and age, we need to actively gather information instead of waiting for it to come to us.
- It is important for event organizers to actively disseminate information through various media.
- Multilingual flyers are important for deepening exchanges.
- Households with children attending nursery or elementary school can obtain information easier, since the school distributes many flyers, etc.
- Putting effort into promoting events through SNSs and flyers should help deepen exchanges.
- Young foreign residents want to post that they participated in Japanese culture and festivals on TikTok, Facebook, etc.
- We need to think about how to communicate based on the current times and changing social situation.
- Compared to the previous survey, I had the impression that the number of foreign residents who obtain information using the Internet, websites and SNSs has increased rapidly.
- Rather than distributing flyers, information should be provided using a 2D code so it can be viewed on smartphones.
- According to the survey, the awareness of city services such as the official SNSs and online start guide videos were low, which is an issue.

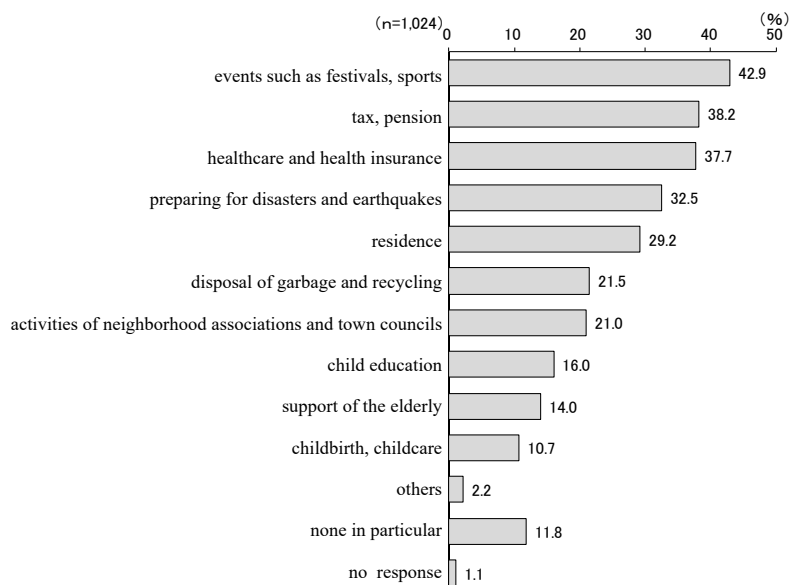
Survey for foreign residents Q23

Shinjuku City provides information in multiple languages. (Japanese with kana on characters, English, Chinese, and Korean) Do you know about any of below? (Circle as many as you like.)



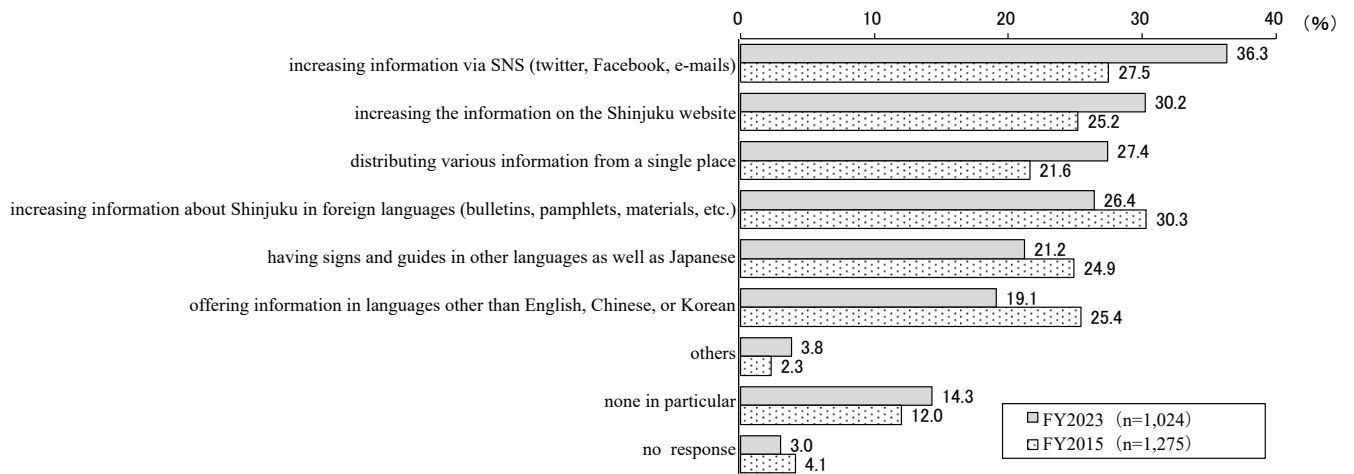
Survey for foreign residents Q24

What kind of information would you like while living in Shinjuku? (Circle as many as you like.)



Survey for foreign residents Q25

What would you like Shinjuku City to do in order to receive necessary information? (Circle as many as you like.)



(5) Exchanges and Events

The survey for both Japanese and foreign residents also asked what respondents think will be necessary to promote multicultural city development in Shinjuku. Providing opportunities for “gatherings and events with Japanese people” was the most common response from foreign residents (Q29), while “gatherings and events with Japanese and foreign residents” was the second most common response from Japanese residents (Q23).

Committee members introduced specific examples of gatherings and events showing that casual exchanges and events in the local community are a major driving force for promoting multicultural living.

In particular, the festivals at the ten Chiiki Centers in the city are familiar events that anyone can easily participate. The programs are composed of the activities of local residents and activity groups, so they are a good first step for foreign residents to start interacting with Japanese residents.

One committee member who had experience hosting an event to introduce foreign food culture commented: “It’s important to think about what you can do to live in Japan and to understand each other, and to take a step forward rather than being passive.” This kind of comment helps to foster awareness of multicultural living.

Another committee member commented that they hoped connections between people formed at gatherings and events would lead to ongoing regular interactions instead of being a one-time thing. Other opinions were that it would be good to create opportunities for gatherings based on common topics and with people of the same generation.

For people from various parts of the community to participate in gatherings and other events, it is essential for Japanese residents to be open to foreign residents, and for foreign residents to take the first step toward participating in the community.

Participation in gatherings and events will foster awareness of multicultural living, which will help promote multicultural city development.

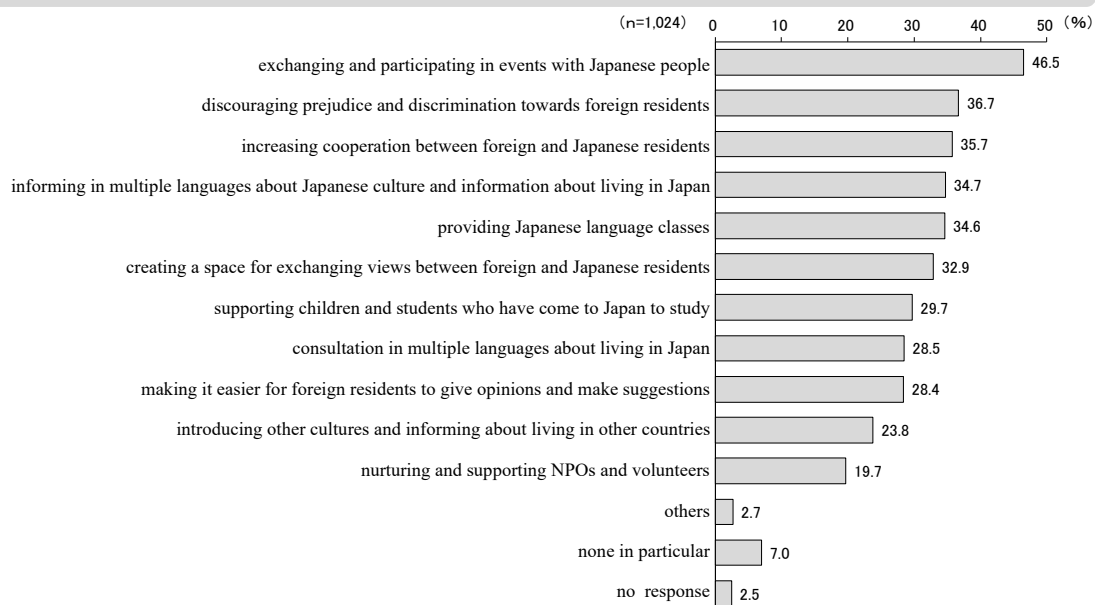
(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

- The festivals in the Okubo area are really fun, since many foreign residents of all ages participate. I hope this spreads to other areas as well.
- Bon dancing and Christmas gatherings are easy to participate in.
- Read-aloud sessions in Japanese and foreign languages are conducted at Okubo Elementary School every month.
- Festivals, kimchi making, breadmaking and other events are conducted in Okubo Chiiki Center.

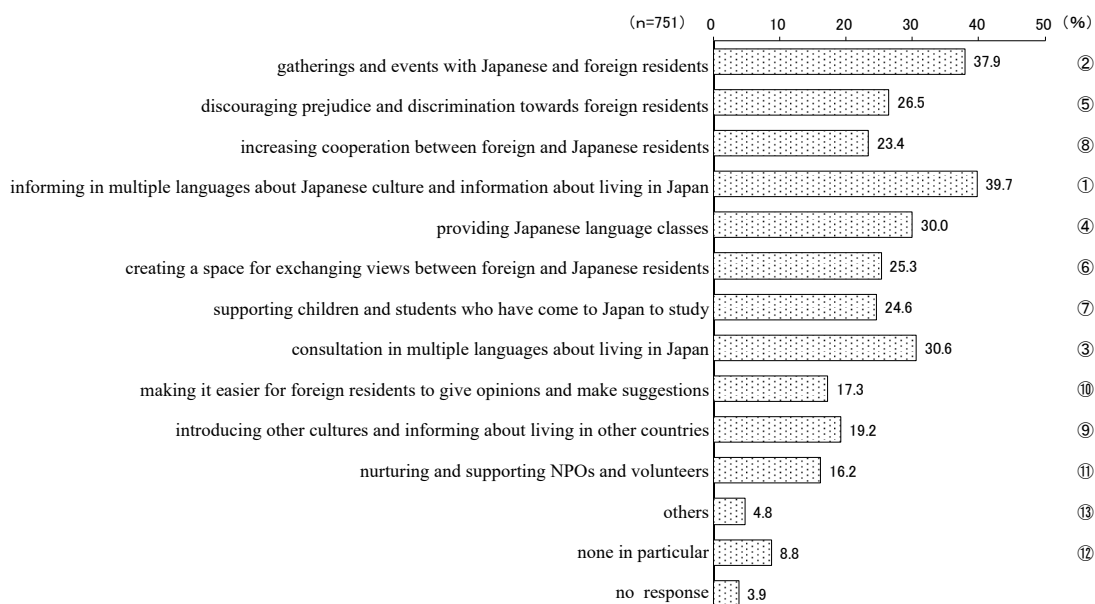
- It would be great for foreign residents to participate in Chiiki Center festivals.
- I thought about what I could do in the community, and hosted a kimchi-making event. To live in Japan, it is important to think about what we can do for mutual understanding and take a step forward, instead of just staying passive.
- I hope cleaning activities and disaster preparation drills lead to regular interactions with people.
- A common topic of interest, such as games and traveling, can help people become closer.
- It would be good to create opportunities where those in the same generation can interact.
- By interacting with and making friends with Japanese people, it becomes easier for foreign residents to talk about various issues with them.
- I'd like to discuss providing information to foreign residents at town councils and residents associations.
- As a foreign resident, participating in events where there are few foreign residents can require a significant amount of courage.
- To interact effectively, it is important for the Japanese in the community to be open to foreign residents. It is also important for foreigners to take the first step to participate.
- At exchange events, it would also be good to have various consultation corners about status of residence, medical care, etc.

What do you think is necessary in future for Shinjuku City in order to promote multicultural communities? (Circle as many as you like.)

Survey for foreign residents Q29

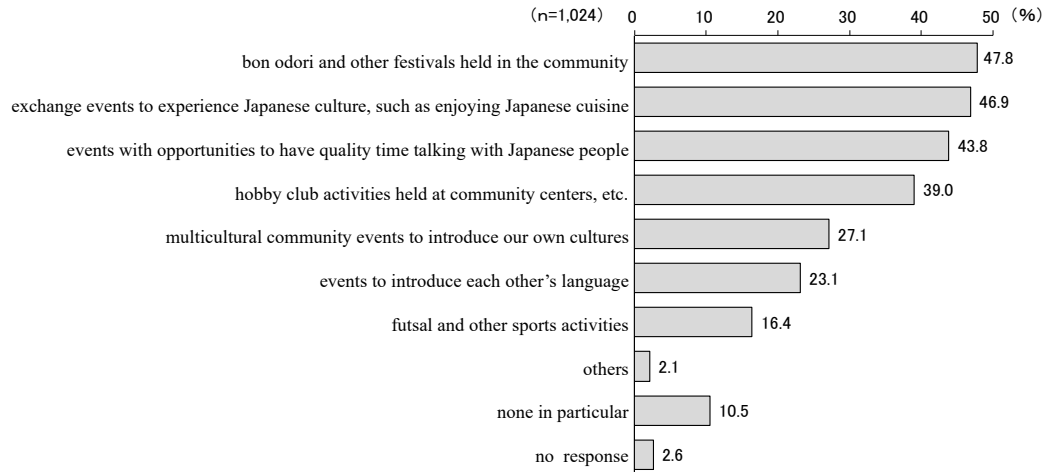


Survey for Japanese residents Q23

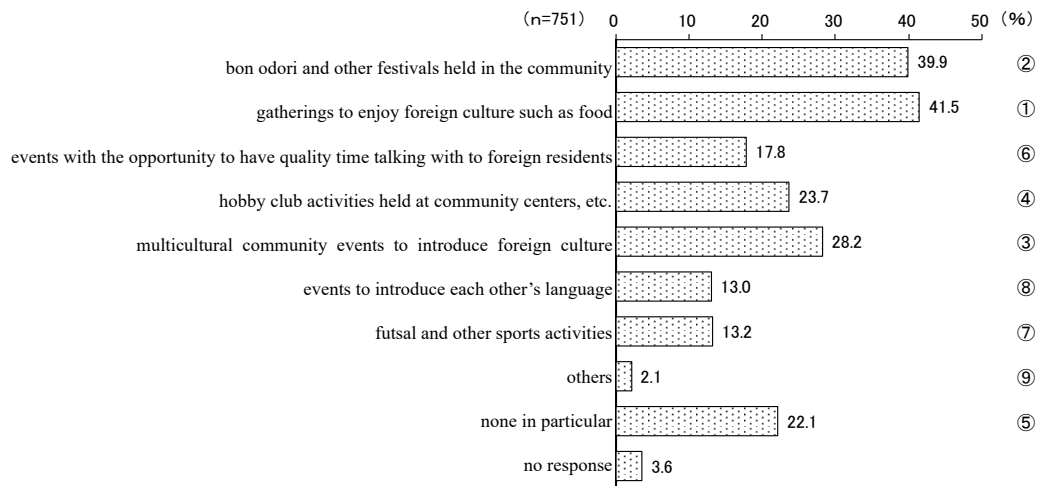


What kind of exchange/events would you like to participate in? (Circle as many as you like.)

Survey for foreign residents Q30



Survey for Japanese residents Q24



Note: The numbers in the circle indicate the ranking within the survey for Japanese residents.

(6) Awareness of Multicultural Living

The conference provided materials revealing the results of the Survey on Multicultural Living, as well as the results of the City Administration Monitor Survey.

The results of the City Administration Monitor Survey showed that a high percentage of respondents believe that multicultural living was progressing in the community. The committee members commented that this was the result of steady efforts to create a multicultural community, that Shinjuku City's philosophy of multicultural living was shared and understood by local residents, and that local residents understood that foreign residents were contributing to the liveliness and vitality of the area and this idea is pervasive. These comments show that awareness of multicultural living is being fostered.

On the other hand, one committee member introduced cases in which simple Japanese and multilingual support were not widespread in the community, and there were opinions that Japanese people did not understand foreign people well.

Japanese residents understanding the differences between Japanese and foreign cultures fosters awareness of multicultural living and helps them to accept foreign residents with a more open mind. For this reason, it is important to promote understanding by introducing foreign cultures to Japanese residents, and to create opportunities for interaction between Japanese and foreign residents. At the same time, it is necessary to distribute information on residence status and the immigration control system widely.

Another commenter mentioned that because there are many foreign residents in Shinjuku, Japanese residents have become used to foreign residents and no longer think of their presence as out of the ordinary. We think this is a sign that multicultural living in Shinjuku City is progressing and residents' awareness is changing.

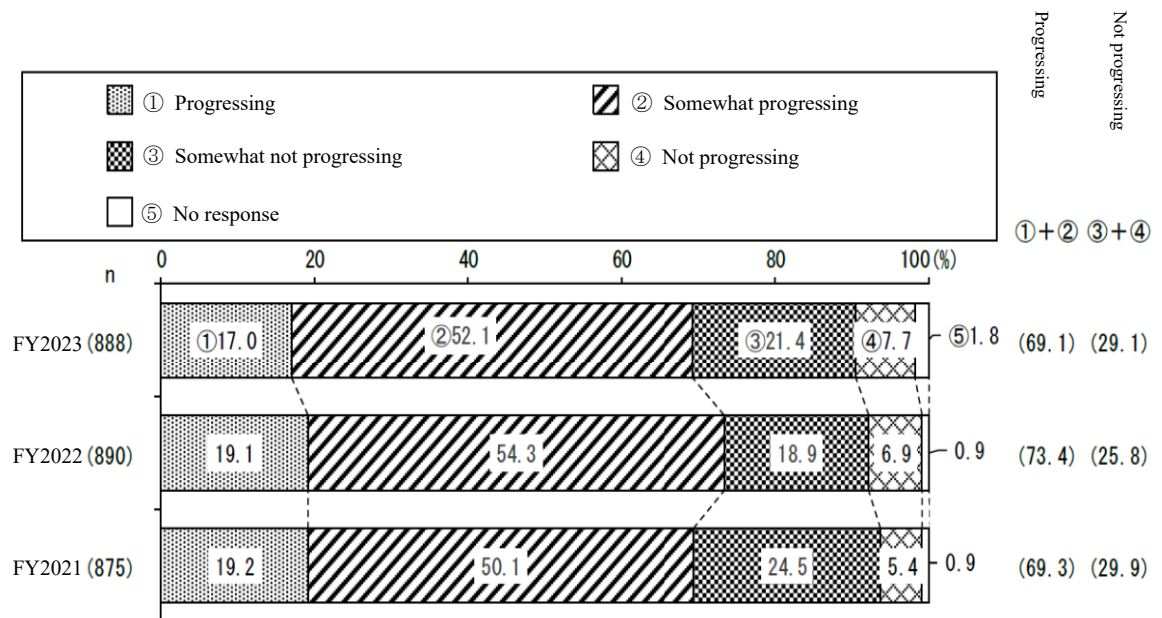
(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

- The number of respondents who answered that “multicultural living in the community is progressing” in the City Administration Monitor Survey was high. I believe this is a result of steady efforts for promoting multicultural city development.
- Shinjuku City's philosophy of multicultural living is being shared and understood by city residents.
- Shinjuku City has many foreign residents whose status of residence indicates they are highly skilled professionals, students, entrepreneurs and company employees. City residents understand that foreign residents are playing a role in the liveliness and vitality of the city and this idea is

pervasive.

- Looking at the flyers for disaster-preparedness drills and Bon dancing, some of the information is difficult to understand even for Japanese people, and it seems no thought given to providing information in multiple languages. I feel that it's necessary to raise the awareness of organizers.
- There have been cases in which *keigo* and kanji were being used to communicate with foreign residents, and they did not understand. It seemed that Japanese people were unaware about how difficult those are for foreign residents, and that the use of simple Japanese wasn't widespread.
- It is important for everyone to learn about multicultural city development.
- Even if Japanese people want to embrace foreign residents, it is unreasonable for them to study and understand the culture of every country. Learning about even one country will facilitate communication.
- If Japanese people had more opportunities to learn about cultural and social differences in greater depth, I think they would be able to accept foreign residents with a more open mind.
- Many Japanese people don't really understand foreign residents and are too passive. I think it would be good if Japanese people had a greater awareness of being more open to foreign residents, such as by holding events.
- The media should be reporting on the residence status system, such as why some foreign residents cannot work.
- It is necessary to educate city residents on the residence status system.
- I used to be surprised when stores had foreign staff members, but now it feels normal. Since foreign staff members are able to do their jobs and understand the language, it doesn't even cross my mind that they are not Japanese.
- The fact that we have become accustomed to foreign residents and no longer think about it is because multicultural living in Shinjuku City has reached a certain level. For example, in New York City, it doesn't matter that you're Asian, and you're not treated differently.
- Pursuing multicultural living involves considering the perspective of foreign residents. This leads to a re-examination of the lives of Japanese people, and is a valuable learning experience. Japanese people have same problems with foreign residents. Issues such as neighborhood relations, greetings, problems, prejudice, discrimination and language are common topics. I think that information exchange, interaction and events ultimately represent modern society.

City Administration Monitor Survey: Progress of Multicultural Living (yearly trends)

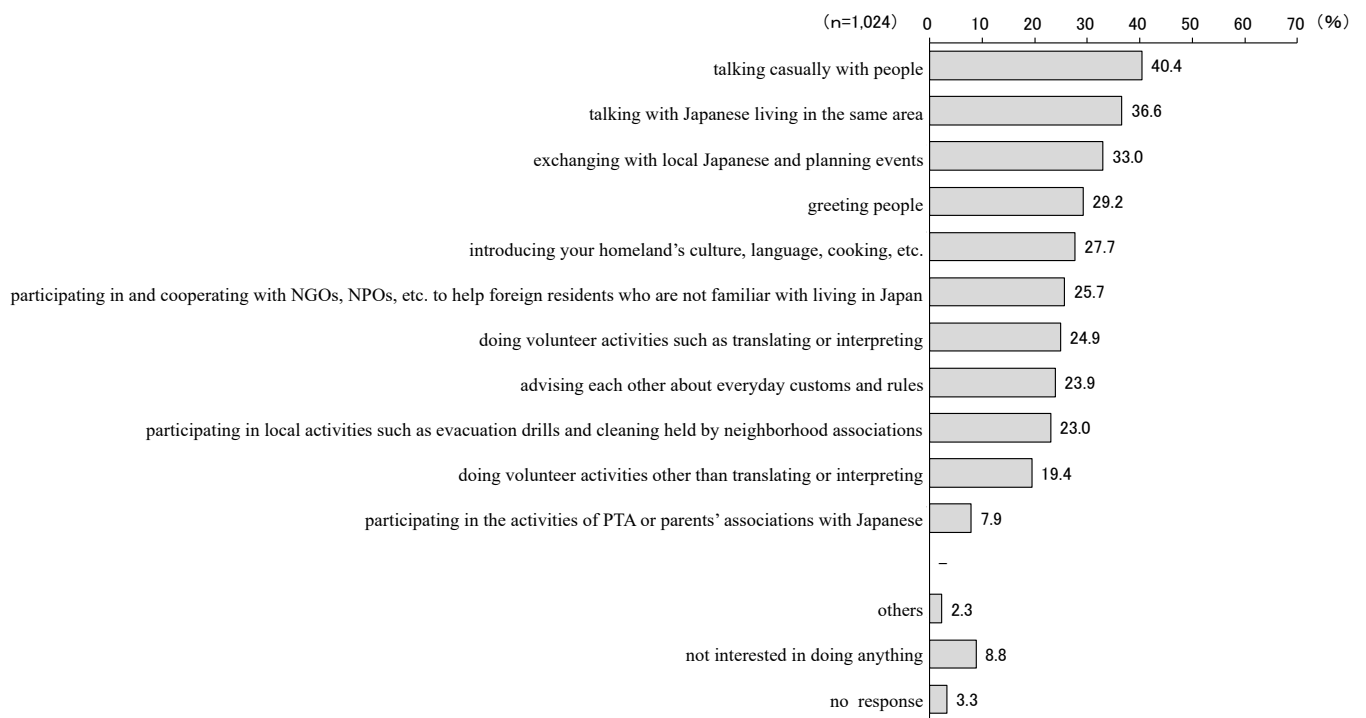


(7) Promoting Multicultural City Development

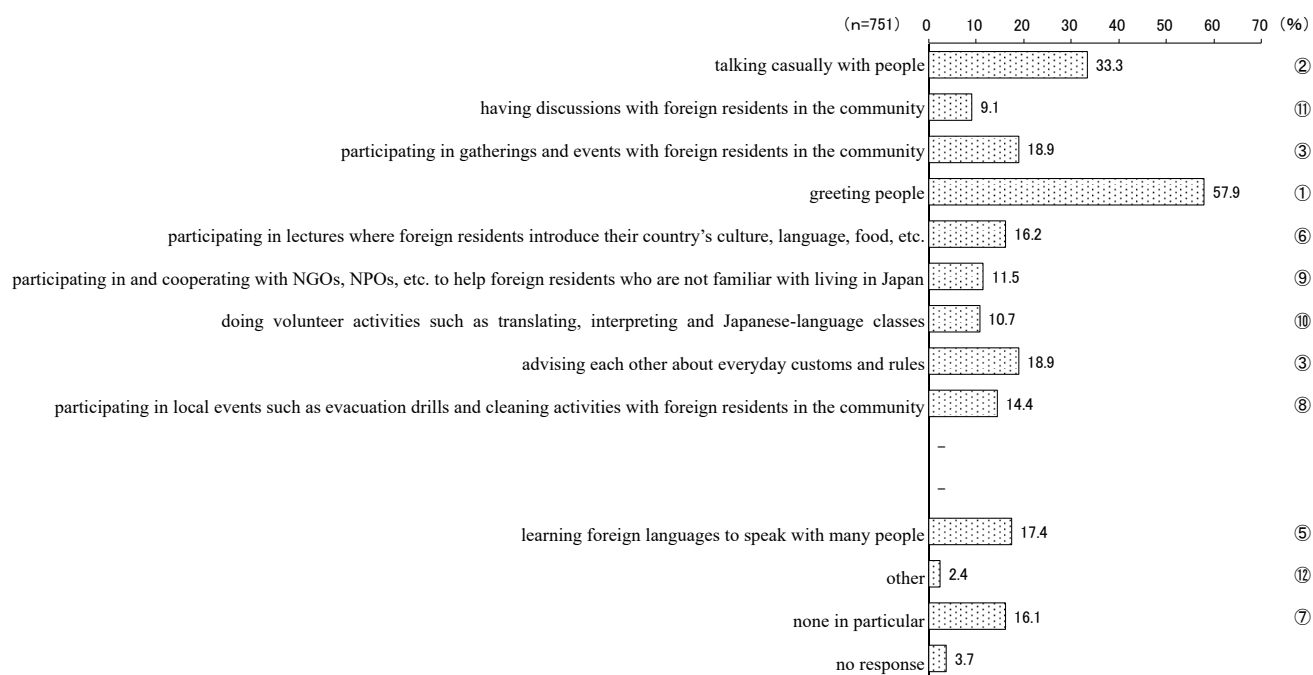
① Interested activities and abilities

The survey asked what kind of activities respondents are interested in and how they can use their abilities to promote multicultural city development. The most common response from foreign residents (Q28) was “talking casually with people,” while from Japanese residents (Q22) it was “greeting people.” By starting with things we can do easily, such as everyday conversation and greetings, we can build open relationships that will promote multicultural city development.

Survey for foreign residents Q28



Survey for Japanese residents Q22



② Building networks between local residents and activity groups

Committee members introduced actual cases related to local residents and activity groups, and expressed opinions about relationship building.

People from various countries are exchanging information and interacting with each other in the community, and this is spreading. To advance multicultural living, it is vital to promote the creation of networks between Japanese and foreign residents, as well as between activity groups, and for the whole community to think about multicultural living and work together.

(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

- At the Four Country Meeting in Okubo, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese and Nepali residents gather to exchange information and offer help. This movement is spreading to other foreign communities.
- Cooperation with foreign communities will be vital in the future.
- Shinjuku City must think about how to link Japanese and foreign residents.
- We must work on creating networks. I think the Shinjuku City Multicultural Council can be used as a starting point.
- The community as a whole must think about what it can do.
- We should work with NPOs.
- Support should be provided to foreign entrepreneurs and others who want to host language

classes and events.

③ **Shinjuku City: The Model of Multicultural Living**

The population of foreign residents in the city decreased for a time due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but after COVID was reclassified as a Category 5 infectious disease, their numbers have recovered and continue to trend upward.

In addition, Japan is expected to accept more foreign workers along with their accompanying family members, so the population of foreign residents in general is also expected to rise.

As committee members have pointed out, in the future it is likely that Japan will become a multi-ethnic nation like other countries, so there will be a need to further promote multicultural living.

Shinjuku City, where many foreign residents already live, has been working on various multicultural living policies. The city is therefore expected to serve as a forerunner and model for other municipalities.

It is important for Shinjuku City residents to recognize that multicultural living is progressing in Shinjuku, and for them to foster and spread awareness of multicultural living.

As a city, Shinjuku is expected to use the results of the Survey on Multicultural Living as core data, and consider and implement new policies as the municipality closest to the residents.

(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

- In Singapore, there are people from various countries, including Indian and Chinese. I think that Japan will become like Singapore in the near future.
- Japan must learn from other countries that accept foreign workers to identify what was effective and what was not, and to respond to the anticipated risks.
- The issue for Shinjuku City is that there are many international students, but many choose to leave after graduation. If they continue to live here, it will be easier for the government to promote multicultural living.
- The city boasts a strong point in its diversity, with foreign residents from approximately 130 different nationalities.
- The population of foreign residents is expected to rise in Japan. Shinjuku's initiatives until now can be used as a reference.
- Shinjuku will become a model for other municipalities. There are many aspects that are worth studying.
- I hear that people in regional cities are worried about the increasing number of foreign residents.

I can say with confidence that they should definitely look at Shinjuku to alleviate their fears.

- I think it is great that various foreign communities are living together in Shinjuku.
- I want to work to make the Okubo area even better so that the good aspects of Okubo can become a model for other areas.
- The best would be to create a win-win relationship between Japanese and foreign residents.

5. Walking Tour of the Okubo Area and Facility Tour (ninth meeting)

To grasp the actual situation of the area and deepen discussions, committee members took a walking tour of the Okubo area and visited the Okubo Chiiki Center and Okubo Library—both places where Japanese and foreign residents gather and interact.

(1) Okubo Walking Tour

The walking tour started at the Tokyo Metropolitan Health Plaza Hygeia, where Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza is located. The group entered the street known as “Ikemen-dori” (Good-Looking Men Street) from Shokuan-dori Ave., and saw that the Korean restaurants and shops were bustling with people.

The group then walked past the crowds of Shin-Okubo Station and to the street dubbed “Islam Yokocho,” observing the shops that sell halal (permitted by Muslim law) food and goods.

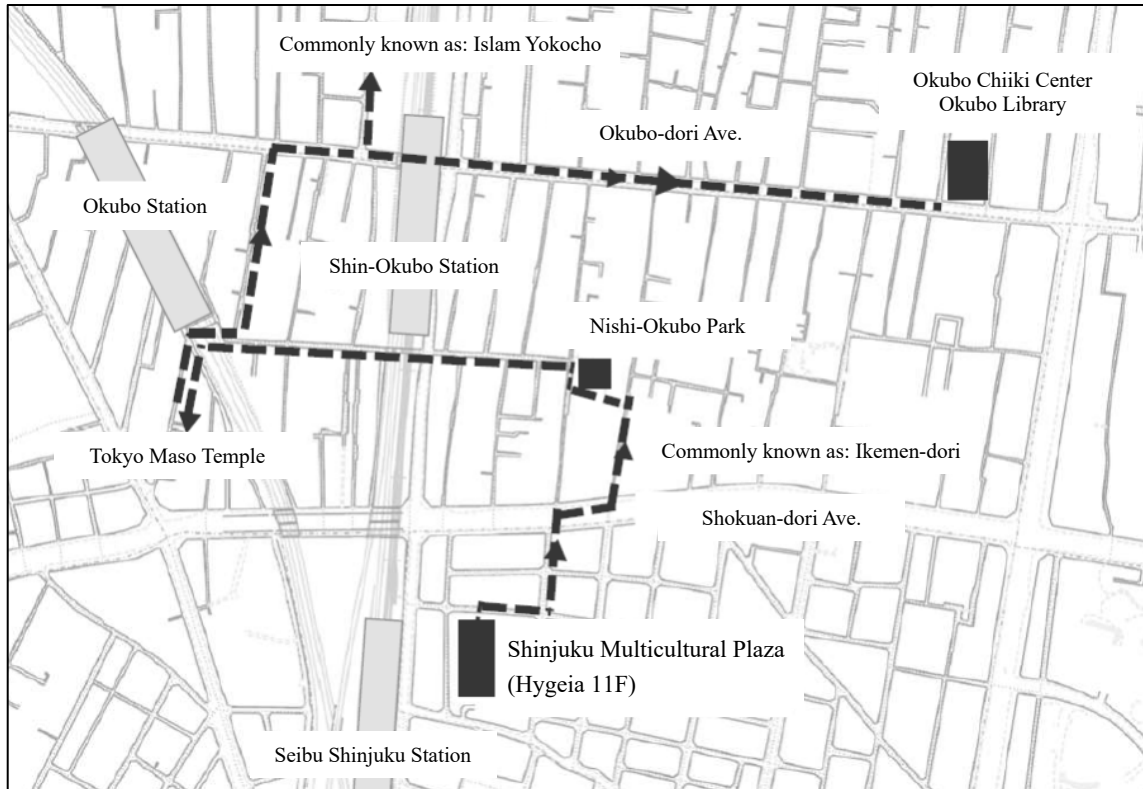
Proceeding along Okubo-dori Ave. toward the Okubo Chiiki Center, they observed stores selling goods of various countries such as South Korea, China, Thailand and Vietnam. There were also many churches along the street, and they felt that foreign residents were visiting these churches.

Committee members commented that they “felt this small area was a microcosm of a true multinational and multicultural society” and “sensed the vitality of Shinjuku and could say with confidence that the city should be used as a model.” In addition to the explanations administrative office staff from the Multicultural Living Promotion Section provided, committee members who live and work in the Okubo area offered insights. The tour became an opportunity for committee members to share information and interact with each other.

The Okubo area, once a modest residential neighborhood with commercial districts, has undergone a significant transformation, evolving into an international enclave where people can readily experience foreign cultures. The tour revealed that while long-time residents initially felt a sense of confusion, they have worked with ingenuity to help develop a vibrant town full of vitality.

(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

- Today's tour showed a microcosm of a multinational and multicultural society.
- I felt that I didn't need to go overseas to experience foreign culture.
- Thinking about Okubo made me realize how full of vitality it is.
- Okubo seems brighter than before.
- The tour of the area and facilities made me realize the vitality of Shinjuku. I hear that people in regional cities are worried about the increasing number of foreign residents. I can say with confidence that they should definitely look at Shinjuku to alleviate their fears.
- Okubo used to be a residential area with shopping streets, but it's suddenly became a tourist attraction. There was some confusion, but the community worked with ingenuity.



Receiving an explanation at Nishi-Okubo Park



Observing a halal shop at Islam Yokocho

(2) Facility Tour (Okubo Chiiki Center and Okubo Library)

At the Okubo Chiiki Center, the tour group heard that the facility has made various efforts to accommodate foreign visitors, such as displaying information in multiple languages and using pictograms. The center also holds events that anyone can easily participate in, such as the Satsuki Festival.

Next, the group visited Okubo Library, where they heard that the library is working to encourage multicultural living through its large collection of foreign-language books and reading-aloud sessions using foreign-language picture books.

Committee members commented that it was wonderful that the Okubo Chiiki Center and Okubo Library had accumulated a lot of know-how, and they felt that these facilities were welcoming foreign residents.

The facilities tour showed that many people use the Okubo Chiiki Center and Okubo Library as a base for the local community, and that these places are revitalizing the area and keeping it lively.

The initiatives of both facilities can be directly connected to the fostering of awareness of multicultural living in society.

A committee member also commented that if the initiatives of the Okubo Chiiki Center and Okubo Library were to spread throughout Shinjuku City, multicultural living would be encouraged even without visiting Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza.

In previous meetings, the conference had talked about strategies for attracting people to Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza. Recognizing that multicultural living initiatives are being carried out on a local scale, however, presents an opportunity to reconsider the Plaza' role.

(Major opinions expressed at the meetings)

- At the Okubo Chiiki Center and Okubo library, we witnessed initiative based on accumulated know-how.
- The initiatives of the Okubo Chiiki Center and Okubo Library will promote mutual understanding between Japanese and foreign residents, and I want to introduce them to many people.
- The Okubo Chiiki Center uses visual information, such as pictograms for evacuation routes. I felt it was very creative and that there was a lot I can learn from it.
- I liked the way that the Okubo Chiiki Center would think about and address problems together.
- I use the Okubo Chiiki Center once a month for meetings.
- I made dumplings at Okubo Chiiki Center about a decade ago.

- The initiatives of the Okubo Chiiki Center are a model for what other facilities should do.
- The reading-aloud session of foreign-language books is an initiative that fosters awareness of multicultural living.
- Okubo Library accepts people from various countries. It is clear that it is connected to people's lives on a closer level, not just providing library services.
- I'm proud of the initiatives of Okubo Library, and think it contributes to making Okubo an attractive area.
- I learned that there are multilingual books at Okubo Library.
- Many Japanese-language school students use Okubo Library.
- Since the library accepts donations of foreign-language books, I will ask students to bring them in.
- If all the facilities in Shinjuku City carried out the initiatives of the Okubo Chiiki Center and Okubo Library, people would not have to travel all the way to Shinjuku Multicultural Plaza.



Receiving explanations in an Okubo Chiiki Center meeting room



Receiving explanations at the Okubo Library

Chapter 4: Recommendations

For the conference's sixth term, we pursued discussions under the theme "Fostering Awareness of Multicultural Living in the Community." We used the results of the fiscal 2023 Survey on Multicultural Living in Shinjuku City as a reference.

In addition, committee members took a walking tour of the Okubo area and visited the Okubo Chiiki Center and Okubo Library, where Japanese and foreign residents gather and interact, to better grasp the actual situation of the area and deepen discussions.

The committee members gave a wide range of opinions on topics such as living in Japan, language (learning Japanese), and exchanges/events. Those included specific examples and personal experiences and were particularly interesting.

Here we summarize the main points (essentials) of the discussions and present them as recommendations.

1. Discussions Based on the Survey Results

(1) Living in Japan

① Problems and dissatisfactions

- The most common problems foreign residents encounter involve language and lack of friends.
- The difficulty of renting housing and the aging of foreign residents are also issues.

⇒ To resolve the problems of foreign residents to some extent, it is essential to provide support for learning Japanese, promote understanding in the real estate industry, and encourage interactions to prevent foreign residents from becoming isolated.

② Relationships with neighbors

- Almost 90 percent of foreign residents responded that they prefer to speak in Japanese when talking to Japanese people.

⇒ Opportunities for friendly relationships may increase if Japanese residents speak slowly to foreign people in simple Japanese. To this end, measures to foster awareness in Japanese residents are needed.

- Relationships are more distant because of the city's urban environment.

⇒ For local residents to build open relationships with each other and live comfortably and with peace of mind in their community, the local community must be energized.

③ Conditions and image in the community

- Many Japanese residents expressed positive sentiments (responded “favorable” or “somewhat favorable”) regarding foreign residents living in Japan.
- While Japanese residents have concerns about garbage disposal, noise and the like, they have a positive image of foreign cultures and food.
- Opinions about the Okubo area were positive, with comments such as “it’s lively” and “it’s become brighter.”

⇒ **The sight of foreign residents in Shinjuku has become an everyday occurrence. Overall, the impression is good, and it seems that the community is accepting foreign cultures and that multicultural city development is progressing. The city must continue promoting the initiatives it has pursued so far.**

④ Trouble (rules and manners in daily life)

- The most common response for the survey question regarding trouble was “none in particular.”

⇒ **Japanese residents are now more familiar with foreign residents. On the other hand, there was also an opinion that there are few problems because Japanese and foreign residents do not interact with each other much in the first place.**

- There have been problems regarding garbage disposal and noise.

⇒ **Raising awareness of daily life rules and manners requires community-wide initiatives in addition to government measures. Raising awareness through exchanges should be effective.**

⑤ Prejudice and discrimination

- Foreign residents have felt prejudice and discrimination, especially when trying to rent living space.

⇒ **In addition to changing the perceptions of Japanese renters, it is essential to raise awareness among foreign residents to ensure that they abide by the rules and manners and adjust their behavior.**

To eliminate this intolerance will require providing opportunities to introduce and experience each other’s cultures.

(2) Language (learning Japanese)

- Foreign residents encounter problems related to the Japanese language.
- Foreign residents have a strong desire to learn Japanese.

⇒ **There is a need to create an environment in which Japanese-language education is readily available to people from various situations, backgrounds, etc.**

Another must is to create opportunities to speak Japanese at events—such as

cleaning activities and other gatherings—so that foreign residents can learn about Japanese culture along with the language.

(3) Disasters and emergencies

- Survey respondents hope for more multilingual support regarding the city's disaster preparation measures.
- ⇒ **It is essential to raise awareness on a daily basis and provide information during disasters in multiple languages.**
- It is important for neighbors to call out to each other if a disaster occurs, regardless of nationality.
- ⇒ **It is important for local residents to build ongoing open relationships and maintain a strong sense of mutual support within the community.**
- There is hope that foreign residents would play roles, such as helping people, in the community in times of disaster.
- ⇒ **It is vital for Japanese and foreign residents to work together to prepare for disasters.**

(4) Necessary information

- Foreign residents want to obtain information about events such as festivals and sports.
- They hope to receive information through SNSs, email and websites.
- ⇒ **Provide foreign residents with accurate information that they need and want to know.**

Utilize SNSs and websites more (a review of the purpose of paper media is also necessary).

Raise awareness of the methods the city uses to provide information (bulletins, SNSs, websites).

(5) Exchanges and events

- Both Japanese and foreign residents want the city to host more gatherings and events to promote multicultural city development.
- Casual exchanges and events in the local community are a major driving force for promoting multicultural living.
- For gatherings and events, it is essential that Japanese residents be accepting of foreign residents.
- It is also important for foreign residents to take the first step toward participating in the community.

⇒ **Participation in gatherings and events will foster awareness of multicultural living, which will in turn promote multicultural city development.**

(6) Awareness of multicultural living

- The results of the City Administration Monitor Survey showed that a high percentage of respondents thought that multicultural living was progressing.

⇒ **This is the result of Shinjuku City's steady efforts to create a multicultural community, and shows that the city's philosophy of multicultural living is shared and understood by local residents.**

- The use of simple Japanese and multilingual support were not widespread in some communities.
- Japanese people do not understand foreign residents well enough.

⇒ **When Japanese residents understand the differences between Japanese culture and foreign cultures, it fosters an awareness of multicultural living and helps them to accept foreign residents with a more open mind.**

There must be opportunities to introduce foreign cultures to Japanese residents, and opportunities for interactions between Japanese and foreign residents.

- Japanese residents have become used to foreign residents and no longer think of their presence as out of the ordinary.

⇒ **This is a result of the progress and increased awareness of multicultural living in Shinjuku City.**

(7) Promoting Multicultural City Development

① Interested activities and abilities

- To the survey asking what kinds of activities respondents are interested in and how they can use their abilities to promote multicultural city development, the most common response from foreign residents was "talking casually with people."
- The most common response from Japanese residents was "greeting people."

⇒ **By starting with things we can do easily, such as everyday conversation and greetings, we can build open relationships that will promote multicultural city development.**

② Building networks between local residents and activity groups

- People from various countries are exchanging information and interacting with each other in the community, and this is spreading.

⇒ **To advance multicultural living, it is vital to promote the creation of networks**

between Japanese and foreign residents, as well as between activity groups, and for the whole community to think about multicultural living.

③ Shinjuku City: The Model of Multicultural living

- Japan is expected to accept more foreign workers, and the population of foreign residents is also expected to increase.

⇒ Shinjuku City has been working on various multicultural living policies. The city is therefore expected to serve as a forerunner and model for other municipalities.

It is important for Shinjuku City residents to recognize that multicultural living is progressing in Shinjuku, and for them to foster and spread awareness of multicultural living.

The city will use the results of the Survey on Multicultural Living as core data, and consider and implement new policies.

2. Fostering Awareness of Multicultural Living in the Community

After classifying and organizing the opinions expressed at the conference as above, we have summarized our opinions regarding the theme for this term, “Fostering Awareness of Multicultural Living in the Community,” as follows:

(1) Attitudes of foreign residents

The results of the survey showed that foreign residents want to converse in Japanese and were highly motivated to learn Japanese. This can be viewed as a sign that foreign residents want to live in harmony with Japanese residents in the local community while communicating with them in Japanese.

For foreign residents to blend in to the local community, it is important for them to understand Japanese customs and habits in addition to learning the language.

In addition, many foreign residents want to participate in local gathering and events, but some feel that it takes courage to do so.

To promote multicultural city development, it is essential for foreign residents to be aware that they need to take the first step, such as participating in casual local festivals.

(2) Attitudes of Japanese residents

In answering the survey, many Japanese residents responded that they felt favorable about foreign residents in Japan. This shows that Japanese residents are accepting of foreign residents, and that the presence of foreign residents in their community has become a common sight for them.

On the other hand, to the survey asking Japanese residents about reasons for not talking to foreign residents—the most common response was “no opportunity to speak to them,” other responses included “cannot speak foreign languages,” “don’t understand the other person’s language,” “don’t know if they understand Japanese,” and “I hesitate trying to talk to them.”

This reveals that it is essential for Japanese residents to get rid of their preconceived ideas that foreign residents can’t understand Japanese, and to be aware that they can communicate with foreign residents by speaking slowly in simple Japanese.

Moreover, understanding the differences between Japanese and foreign cultures will help Japanese residents to accept foreign residents with a more open mind.

(3) Fostering awareness of multicultural living

About 13 percent of population in Shinjuku City are of foreign nationality, and over 130 different nationalities and regions are represented. Their residence status also varies, including students, permanent residents, and engineer/specialist in humanities/international services.

As this data shows, Shinjuku City’s foreign residents are very diverse, and they play an important role in the area’s liveliness and vitality.

In particular, as the population ages and the primary promoters of local activities also grow older, it is essential to get foreign residents involved in such activities. The results of the Survey on Multicultural Living showed that foreign residents have a desire to work together with local residents. For this reason, it is hoped that Japanese residents will also raise their awareness of working together and take part in local activities together.

In local communities, Japanese and foreign residents can live harmoniously together by cooperating and being creative. For example, the Okubo Chiiki Center, Okubo Library and Okubo Elementary School are taking steps to promote multicultural living, such as by providing multilingual support.

These are features of Shinjuku City that other municipalities do not have. We can say that the conditions are in place to foster and enhance awareness of multicultural living. And as we noted before, we used the results of the Survey on Multicultural Living for discussions in the conference. The word “exchange” appeared frequently in both the survey results and the opinions of committee members.

This shows that when implementing policies such as Japanese learning support, along with providing information in multiple languages and consultations for foreign residents, Shinjuku City needs to be creative and conscious of the “exchange” mindset rooted in the local community.

It is essential that foreign residents take the first step toward participating in local activities, and that Japanese residents accept foreign residents with an open mind, without prejudice or discrimination.

Additionally, facilities such as Chiiki Centers and libraries have the potential to become hubs for connecting Japanese and foreign residents in the community.

We believe we can drive multicultural city development even further if local residents, activity groups and the government cooperate to foster an even greater awareness of multicultural living.

3. Conclusion

For the conference's sixth term, we were able to use the latest data based on the results of the Survey on Multicultural Living and proceed with discussions under the theme of "Fostering Awareness of Multicultural Living in the Community."

In addition, the tour of the Okubo area let us experience the liveliness and vitality of that town. The tour of the Okubo Chiiki Center and Okubo Library helped us realize that wonderful multicultural living measures were being implemented in local communities.

Since the discussion theme was broad, committee members expressed a wide range of opinions, but we were able to summarize these opinions as recommendations and indicate the issues and direction to take.

The specific methods of implementation will be left to Shinjuku City and the next-term Shinjuku City Multicultural City Development Conference.

As a parting note, we would like to express our hope that Shinjuku City will become a model for multicultural living and proudly promote its policies.

Reference

List of the Six-Term Shinjuku City Multicultural City Development Conference

Committee Members

Position	Organization	Name	Nationality
Chairperson	Professor, Tokyo Future University of Motivation and Behavioral Sciences	Kaku Iyo	Japan Note: Originally from Taiwan
	Professor, Waseda University Graduate School of Education	Kobayashi Atsuko	Japan
	Associate Professor, Utsunomiya University School of International Studies	Shin Hyewon	South Korea
	Associate Professor, Center for Liberal Arts, Meiji Gakuin University	Hasebe Mika	Japan
	Managing director and chief program officer, Japan Center for International Exchange	Menju Toshihiro	Japan
	Resident	Zayar Htwe	Myanmar
	Resident	Tran Thi Thu	Vietnam
	Resident	Matsuda Nami	Japan
	Resident	Yang Eun Young	South Korea
	Intercultural Child-Rearing Information Station	Ando Hiroko	Japan
	Koreans in Japan Federation	Lee Hang Soon	South Korea
Deputy chairperson	Mitta Foundation	Okuda Kousei	Japan Note: Originally from Myanmar
	Association des Français et Francophones du Japon	Joelle Ezoe-Canel	France
	Korean Residents Union in Japan, Shinjuku Branch	Kim Hoon	South Korea
	BST Unique Co., Ltd.	Bhushan Ghimire	Nepal
	Macoto Inc.	Nguyen Trung Thanh	Vietnam
	Oyraa Co., Ltd.	Oya Kok	Turkey
	International Exchange Network Health Care Group	Shu Yan	China
	Thai Network in Japan	Suzuki Nongyaw	Thailand
	The Fellowship of Japanese Nationality Chinese People	Tachikawa Masaaki	Japan
	Shinjuku City Multicultural Council	Chen Li-Ting	Taiwan
	ASP Japan	Dura Ritu Kumar	Nepal

Deputy chairperson	Sakura Japanese Circle	Harada Kenichi	Japan
	Dream Park Co., Ltd.	Park Sang Bum	South Korea
	Refugee Coordination Committee Japan	Marip Seng Bu	Myanmar
	Shinjuku City Federation of Stores Association	Ito Setsuko	Japan
	Shinsenaku (Japanese-language schools)	Inoue Takayoshi	Japan
	Shinjuku City Social Welfare Officer and Child Welfare Council	Munakata Susumu	Japan
	Shinjuku City Town Councils	Sasaki Akihiro	Japan
	Shinsenaku (professional training colleges)	Tukamoto Takayuki	Japan
	Shinjuku City Town Councils	Morishige Yuko	Japan
	Shinjuku City Town Councils	Yamaguchi Michiyo	Japan

(Reference) Recommendations Made in the Fifth-Term Shinjuku City Multicultural City Development Conference and City Policies

1. Acceptance of new foreign residents

(1) Efficient use of time during the moving-in procedures

- ⇒ Provide flyers with various information related to daily life when groups of new international students are completing moving-in procedures (use of 2D codes)

(2) User-friendly foreign-language consultation services

- ⇒ Cooperate with the Tokyo Regional Immigration Services Bureau consultation service
- ⇒ Consultant training and information sharing

(3) Enhance Japanese-language education support

- ⇒ Venues were increased compared to during the COVID-19 pandemic
Further expansion is being considered

(4) Effective dissemination of information and support

- ⇒ Update the Information on Everyday Living for Foreign Residents website, and now information can be searched according to your life stage, attributes, objectives, etc. (implemented in FY2023)
- ⇒ Disseminate information through SNSs and websites

2. Life in the community for foreign residents

(1) Provision of information by life stage, community participation and exchange

- ⇒ Update the Information on Everyday Living for Foreign Residents website, and now information can be searched according to your life stage, attributes, objectives, etc. (implemented in FY2023)
- ⇒ Provide multilingual information to childrearing households (pregnancy and childbirth, infants and toddlers, nursery school, elementary and junior high school students)

(2) Cooperate with foreign communities

- ⇒ Provide information through the Shinjuku City Multicultural Council and communities of foreign residents

(3) Community activities that will help build relationships

- ⇒ Promote participation in local festivals and events
Promote participation in town councils and residents associations (create and distribute multilingual pamphlets)

3. Establishment of a local community built by Japanese and foreign residents together

(1) Foster awareness of multicultural living

⇒ Implement multicultural exchange events that promote mutual understanding of each other's cultures

(2) Create open relationships

⇒ Promote participation in local festivals and events

Promote participation in town councils and residents associations (create and distribute multilingual pamphlets)