

**Kyoto City Council on Multicultural Policy
Report in FY2010**

<Suggestions to the Kyoto City>

Presented in March 2011 by the Kyoto City Council on Multicultural Policy

1. On the multicultural childcare and education

Suggestions:

1-1 It is proposed that nursery and kindergarten children should experience multicultural interactions more frequently so that they may develop likeness for people with different cultures. Moreover, people engaged in childcare and child education as well as other adults should be provided ample opportunities to know about the present multicultural activities carried out by different organizations to enhance such efforts.

1-2 Systems should be developed for the children having various nationalities and cultural roots to understand and learn from each other, and for the citizens to know the diversity of such children.

Reality and problems:

- Learning culture and ethnic diversity does not begin after entering elementary school. It starts from birth and earlier stages of life in the community. This process is further enhanced through gaining experience and advances to young adulthood. It is important for children to acquire the ability to live in the society through interaction and learning from others including those with different cultural background during nursery and other pre-elementary school educational institutions (facilities). It is also important for those engaged in childcare and child education to learn about multicultural symbiosis.
- There are a number of international and ethnic schools in Kyoto. Other private and public schools also have pupils of various nationalities and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, it is necessary to create an environment where pupils with such diversities can interact with each other and learn together. Activities of international and ethnic schools should be introduced to the citizens and mutual understanding should be encouraged.

2. Easy understandable multilingual information

Suggestions:

2-1: Kyoto city should provide multilingual information about the services and issues related to those who are not proficient in Japanese.

2-2: The city should pass around to the citizens the interpreter services that they provide to those who need them. Cooperation between the city and private organizations is necessary for the effective implementation of the services for foreign residents.

Reality and problems:

- In order to live comfortably, it is important for foreign residents and those who have their roots in foreign countries to have an easy access to the information on the city services. However, it is very difficult for those who are not proficient in Japanese to read everything in websites and pamphlets related to those services. Therefore, it is important for the city to consider more effective ways of providing information to those people by inserting separate list of important points.
- Kyoto City provides interpretation services related to administrative and medical issues for those who are not proficient in Japanese. These include telephone interpretation at the counters of ward offices and dispatching interpreters to the hospitals whenever needed. It is necessary to spread the news about these services to the point that it can reach all those who need them. Cooperation between these medical, public health care and other public affairs interpretation services and the services provided by private organizations will make these services much better and more efficient.

3. Collaboration between the city and private organizations on the problems of foreign residents and those who have their roots in foreign countries*.

Suggestions:

3-1: The city and private organizations should share information on the problems of foreign residents and those who have their roots in foreign countries; and promote mutual understanding.

3-2: The city staff should be provided more opportunities to learn the problems of such people so that they can smoothly cope with and give good services to them.

Realities and problems

- There are many private groups and organizations to support foreign residents and those who have their roots in foreign countries in Kyoto. By sharing information to understand problems, such private groups and organization can complement the city to effectively implement its measures.
- Even if having a trouble or in need of consultation, many foreign residents hesitate to visit the public offices out of worries that they may not convey their problems correctly in Japanese or that they may not receive proper advices. Some hurt or get nervous by words a staff at public office spoke in a casual manner. In dealing with such people, the staffs are expected to be aware of and understand their situation and problems.

* The aforementioned measures and activities related to multicultural symbiosis should not be limited to foreign residents, they should be extended to those who have acquired Japanese citizenship, descendants of international marriages; and other Japanese whose roots are in foreign countries.

4. Enhancement of multicultural symbiosis in communities

Suggestions:

4-1 Communities should be improved so that they can be a place where residents of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds can interact with each other and work together.

4-2 Efforts should be made to establish a system to enhance multicultural activities in communities.

Realities and problems

- In order for the residents of different nationalities and cultural backgrounds to live together with others in their communities, it is important that everyone in the community understand and take interest in various cultures and interact with each other. Many foreigners who arrive newly in Japan form their own communities where they live together and support each other. Such cases are observed in Kyoto, too. Such people wish to establish communication with local residents and expand their network. It is important to support them so as to strengthen the bond between them and their neighborhood.
- Kyoto has a number of multicultural festivals and events which make communities lively. However, there are some problems in holding these events, for instance, shortage of space for the rehearsal of music and theatrical performances, and for making props and exhibits. With the cooperation of schools and local communities in letting them use decommissioned elementary schools, such multicultural activities will gain force and they will not only promote deeper understanding of foreign residents, but also will make the communities lively.