

The Kawasaki City Representative Assembly for Foreign Residents Newsletter Issue No. 47



KAWASAKI CITY
川崎市

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Thinking Together about Multicultural Life <Open Forum Report>

The Open Forum for FY 2012 was held on December 9 at the Industrial Promotion Hall - Kawasaki. One of the aims of this Forum is to hear the voices of those who are not on the Representative Assembly and to reflect their opinions in the deliberations. It provides an opportunity to share information about the Representative Assembly, and a place for foreign residents to meet each other, as well for foreign residents and Japanese residents. Before to the Open Forum, over about a month, the representatives visited the Japanese classes within the city to speak to the foreign residents participating as students. Approximately 110 people came to the Open Forum and discussions continued for three hours from 14:00 through 17:00. During the first half of the Open Forum, the representatives first gave brief greetings in their native languages and then introduced themselves in Japanese.

A lecture on disaster preparedness was given by Mr. Tsunoda, of the Kawasaki City Administration Office Crisis Preparedness Room. The participants eagerly asked questions after his lecture – perhaps they had recognized how dreadful earthquakes can be from the handouts and movies shown.

The latter half of the Open Forum was divided into the “Welfare and Education Session” and the “Life and Society Session.” The session for Welfare and Education focused primarily on education at home, native language education, and multicultural exchange, while the session for Life and Society focused on the topics of transmission of information and involvement in local community activities. We received valuable comments and opinions from the participants in the Forum.

We also invited Professor Chikako Kashiwazaki, Department of Economics, Keio University and Professor Yuji Nakano, Department of Law, Komazawa University to these sessions as commentators. The sessions were followed by a plenary meeting, in which an active discussion took place, particularly on the topic of multicultural exchange. An informal reception was held after the closing ceremony.

With the valuable opinions we received in this Open Forum, we will continue to strive to help develop Kawasaki City into a better place to live. The Representative Assembly is always open to your opinions and comments through comments from observers, email, or fax. Please feel free to tell us what you think.

(GAN, Leong Yeun)



Participants' Opinions at the Open Forum (Partial List)

Welfare and Education Session

- Please provide a place for communication between parents who are Japanese residents and those who are foreign residents – we ought to share common issues such as the problems that arise between parents and children in a family.
- Please discuss ways for the city to provide support for education at home.

Life and Society Session

- It may be more helpful if information about disaster prevention training administered by local communities were made publicly available by the city.
- If there are residents who are able to communicate in foreign languages, then it may be helpful to attach translated summaries to the notices distributed among the households within a local neighborhood association
- It would be a good idea for the Representative Assembly to conduct on-site lectures at high schools and universities in Kawasaki.

