

April 24, 2012

Bureau of Citizens and Cultural Affairs

Community Internationalization Study Committee Report

The Community Internationalization Study Committee began carrying out deliberations last December after receiving an inquiry from the head of the Bureau of Citizens and Cultural Affairs regarding how to provide foreign residents with information in times of emergency, drawing upon lessons from the Great East Japan Earthquake. This is to announce that the study committee has now submitted its report, as outlined in the attachment. .

Report's Key Points

1. What foreign residents did during and after the Great East Japan Earthquake

a. Situation when the earthquake struck

Many people panicked because the Great East Japan Earthquake was their first earthquake experience.

Many were also confused because they could not understand the station announcements made after transportation facilities stopped operating.

Remarkably, many people used Twitter and Facebook to let their families know that they were safe.

People mainly gathered information from television or the Internet.

b. Situation following the earthquake

According to a survey, one quarter of Japan's foreign residents returned to their countries at the urging of their families back home. Around 60 percent of foreign residents, however, did not evacuate, move, or return to their countries. They had resided in Japan for more years than those that went home.

People needed information pertaining to earthquakes and the nuclear accident, along with information about where water and food could be obtained, rolling blackout schedules, and other aspects of daily living.

Many foreign residents suffered from a lack of information because they could not sufficiently understand the jargon being used about the nuclear accident.

2. Issues that became clear

- a. The Tokyo metropolitan government, other municipal governments, and organizations that assist foreign residents have carried out various efforts to provide foreign residents with information about disaster preparedness to prepare them for times of emergency, but the information has not been absorbed sufficiently.
 - b. Understanding the many special terms used when supplying information about earthquakes as well as by government officials is difficult for foreign residents who do not possess sufficient Japanese ability.
 - c. The Tokyo metropolitan government, other municipal governments, and organizations that assist foreign residents mainly use methods such as home pages and leaflets to provide information, but using SNS for this purpose is common among foreign residents.
 - d. The main job of volunteer interpreters has been to interpret at shelters and similar places during times of emergency, but insufficient thought has been given to using their skills in other areas or during normal times.
 - e. People need to respond calmly, based on an accurate understanding of disaster preparedness, during times of emergency when all sorts of information is flying about. However, foreign residents cannot be described as being sufficiently armed with that information when compared to Japanese residents.
3. Efforts to provide information more effectively
- a. Produce and provide reference materials in easy Japanese, incorporating the input of foreign residents from the planning stages onward.
 - b. Use video images with visual appeal—distributed over the Internet or at places where many foreign residents gather—to spread information.
 - c. Use Twitter, Facebook, and other forms of SNS to distribute information.
 - d. Have volunteer translators translate information provided on Twitter, and use volunteer interpreters to interpret at disaster preparedness lectures and drills held by municipal governments.
 - e. During normal times, encourage calm and rational responses among the public by promoting participation in disaster preparedness drills held during local festivals and other events so that people can have fun while learning about how to react to disasters.

Note regarding the Community Internationalization Study Committee: This committee was established in 2001 to study issues related to making Tokyo a place where foreigners find it easy to live and work. Its members include both Japanese and foreign residents.