

Report on the World Café Workshop – August 29, 2015

On Saturday morning, August 29th, 22 people showed up for the Multinational Senior Community meeting at L-Plaza to discuss the positive things they are doing nowadays, and the things they are most concerned about in the future.

The facilitator for this meeting was Kaori Okuda, who kept everything flowing smoothly. The participants were grouped around four large tables, mixing them by age and nationality. This allowed for a large variety of responses to the primary questions. Each table had a facilitator who was responsible for managing the discussion and recording the key points that were brought up. After a sufficient period of time the responses were summarized by each group leader for everyone in the room. The positive activities in life were addressed first, then the groups were remixed, and the concerns of life were discussed in the same format. During the last 30 minutes, the whole group discussed the findings and were asked to consider what topics might be appropriate and beneficial themes for future meetings.

It was an extremely worthwhile meeting where we not only learned a lot from each other, but could also truly get to know each other better, and thereby share personal feelings and opinions. We were fortunate in that Kathleen Riggins volunteered to capture all of the notes recorded on the posters created during the meeting, so that this report could be shared with you. Those of you who could not attend the meeting hopefully can benefit from our discussion. We also hope that you might contact us with your own ideas to add to the points below and to suggest themes for future meetings as we continually plan ahead. Items below have been sorted alphabetically within each category.

1. What are some good things you're doing for yourself now?

Social Networking

- Call husband who lives in Honshu (also long-distance Skype connections)
- Communicating with friends through Facebook
- Meeting friends and participating in local events
- MSC and other group affiliations (regular meetings)
- Operating the Hokkaido Insider News Service
- Reconnecting with old friends from childhood and Peace Corps days
- Socializing more since children are now independent
- Volunteering

Mental activities

- Collecting stamps
- Cooking
- Creative crafting
- Gardening
- Learning how to make a website
- Listening to music (relaxing)
- Playing an instrument (flute & piano)
- Prayer & meditation
- Push myself mentally
- Reading a lot
- Reading scriptures
- Studying financial investments
- Talking with friends and grandchildren
- Teaching
- Watching movies (especially comedies)
- Weaving as a hobby
- Writing a book

Study

- Finishing my course work in Personal Finance to become a financial adviser
- Geology
- Learn to cook new dishes
- Medical interpretation
- Study English
- Study to deepen my faith through YouTube
- Travel (written by all 4 groups)
- Writing poems

Health & Diet

- Cancer in remission for one & a half years
- Do trigger point massage
- Drink water in the morning on an empty stomach
- Drink herb tea
- Drive less
- Eat more vegetables and have soup every day
- Fewer snacks

Physical activities

Health awareness through exercise & Pilates
Jogging and walking (written by all 4 groups)
Kikou (a Chinese exercise)
Park golf (summer) and snowshoeing (winter)
Push myself physically
Scuba diving
Yoga

2. What are your biggest concerns?

Financial

Being able to travel and move around in old age
Decreasing pension & increasing prices
Keeping up with all the policy changes for the elderly
Money and pension mentioned by many participants
Not enough income/savings in old age (financial stability/security)
Work opportunities in the future

Health

Being able to work in the future (physically and mentally)
Cancer
Communicating with medical professionals about health issues
Controlling weight and blood pressure
Healthy body & mind
How to keep physical strength to do daily tasks
Memory problems
Needing health care with my limited Japanese
Not getting dementia or Alzheimer's disease
Rheumatism
Serious illness such as Parkinson's disease
Sudden Injury which incapacitates me
Walking on the ice in winter in Sapporo

Family

Children's education and future
How to take care of my parents
See and be with my kids & ability to take care of grandchildren

Living Alone and Social Isolation

Being an "old" orphan
Decreased interaction with young people
Living alone in the future
Living apart from my family
Social isolation

Global Issues

Economic system - Fair trade
Global warming
Peace
Problems for future generations
Nuclear power plants and radiation
War

Natural Disasters

Disaster prevention
Earthquakes
Tsunami
Volcanic eruptions

End of Life

After death (Will my family be all right?)
Last will and testament (written by 2 groups)
My collection of postage stamps after my death (Will anyone care?)
What will be done with my body in case of sudden death (organ donations?)