

Theme 2: Revitalizing Communities

3. Revitalizing Communities

(1) Proceedings Shigemitsu Hosoe, Mayor of Gifu City

Our second theme is on revitalizing communities, which in fact is an issue that is closely related to the problems facing elderly people. That is to say, the fact that the residents who are the constituent elements of the communities themselves continue to grow older and that the stringent economic conditions facing the current working generation is making them busy with work means that—however you look at it—the people who end up sustaining the communities tend to be the elderly.

Today we will begin by hearing presentations from three city mayors. We will be hearing presentations from Mayor Hioki from Inabe, then Mayor Yoshida from Osakasayama, and then Mayor Sakurai from Minamisoma, in that order.

(2) Presentation Yasushi Hioki, Mayor of Inabe City

The city of Inabe in Mie Prefecture is located due north of the city of Yokkaichi. The city is within commuting distance of Nagoya, and has a little less than 50,000 people, including those in the prefectural border region. As was just mentioned, the issue of elderly people and communities has emerged as a topic of debate. To be sure, various different topics have come up for debate, such as how to sustain the region, how to maintain its vitality over a long period of time, and how to prevent it from growing isolated. I would like to talk a little about this from the angle of child rearing.

Child Rearing and Community Involvement

Yasushi Hioki, Mayor of Inabe City

Challenge: Child rearing in isolation (Document p.1-5)
Children who have had more people involved in their upbringing have a strong tendency to want to have families and raise the next generation when they become adults. Preventing isolation when it comes to child rearing does not just have an impact on the mother's care, but also serves as an undertaking for cultivating her grandchildren's generation.

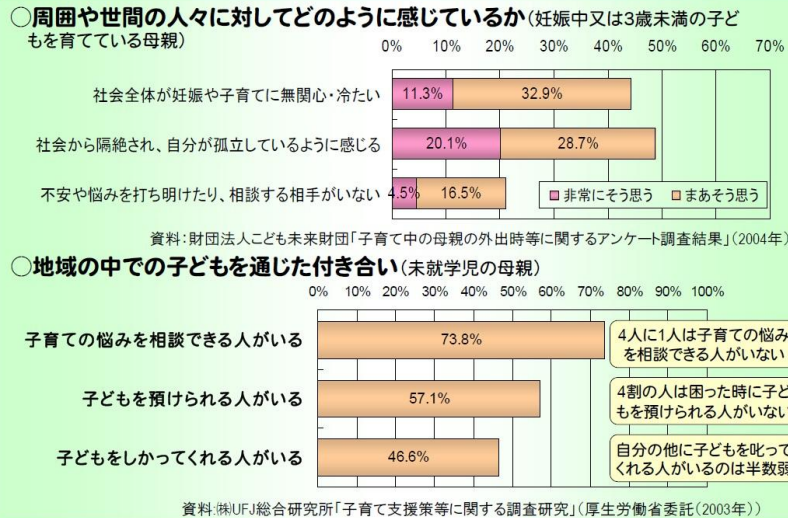
Initiatives: Support for child rearing that involves the local community (Document on Inabe City's support for child rearing)
Get public health nurses and nursery school teachers, supporters (child rearing support teams), and a host of other people involved from the time the child is born up through three years of age. Provide uninterrupted support aimed at all mothers and children.

	Content and objectives	Challenges
Individual instruction	Periodic door-to-door visits: Ascertain mother and child health and home environments	Limited public health nurses and nursery school teachers
Centralized support	Child Rearing Support Centers: Hold gatherings that parents and children aged zero to two can freely take part in (at permanent establishments) Traveling Child Parks: Members of the support centers travel close to where parents and children are to hold exchanges outdoors (twice monthly) Interactions between parents and supporters from the community (child rearing support teams)	Limited number of centers (one or two locations per middle school district) Training supporters
Independent activities	The child rearing support teams hold voluntary exchanges with parents and children at community centers in the region (1/119 community councils)	Training leaders

“Child Rearing in Isolation and the Increased Sense of Burden” as Indicated by a Questionnaire

There is a growing tendency toward increasing isolation when it comes to child rearing. “Child Rearing in Isolation and the Increased Sense of Burden” is a questionnaire for mothers who are either pregnant or who have children under three years of age. In response to the question of what the mothers' personal impressions are regarding those around them and members of the public, roughly 45% of the mothers felt that for the public, society as a whole was apathetic or cold towards pregnancy and child rearing. As such, about half of the women get the feeling that they are cut off and isolated from society. In addition, more than 20% of the women said that they do not have anyone with whom they can confide in and consult with regarding their anxieties and concerns.

孤立化する子育てと負担感の増大



1. Child Rearing in Isolation and the Increased Sense of Burden
2. How do you feel about those around you and members of the public? (Mothers who are pregnant or raising children under three years of age)
3. Society as a whole is apathetic or cold towards pregnancy and child rearing
I feel like I am cut off or isolated from society
I do not have anyone in whom I can confide in and consult with regarding my anxieties and concerns
4. I strongly feel this way I kind of feel this way
5. Source: Results of the Questionnaire Survey on When Mothers Raising Children Venture Out by the Children's Future Foundation (2004)
6. Involvement with Others through Children within the Region (Mothers of preschoolers)
7. I have someone with whom I can consult with over my child rearing concerns
I have someone with whom I can entrust my child
I have someone who can reprimand my child
8. One-fourth of the women lack someone in whom they can consult with about their concerns over child rearing
9. 40% of the women do not have anyone with whom they can entrust their child when problems come up
10. Less than half have someone else who can reprimand their child besides themselves
11. Source: Research Study on Child Rearing Support Measures by UFJ General Research Institute (Commissioned by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2003))

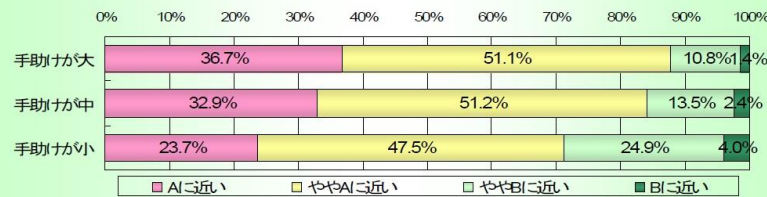
What is more, the situation regarding mothers who associate with others through their children within the region is such that 74% of the women have someone to consult with for their concerns over child rearing. So when viewed the other way around, this indicates that around one-fourth of the women do not have anyone in whom they can consult with regarding their concerns over child rearing. As things currently stand, 40% of the women are not in a position to leave their children in someone else's care when something comes up and they would like to do so for a short while, or when problems emerge. Less than half of them have someone who can administer reprimands to their children, and so many of them do not have anyone who can reprimand their children. The same holds true for the problem of discipline.

With regard to "Help Received from People in Your Surroundings and Impressions of Child Rearing," those mothers who are of child rearing age who receive lots of support and help from the people around them perceive child rearing to be enjoyable, whereas those who receive minimal help find it to be arduous. This offers a vivid illustration of how child rearing is incredibly trying and difficult for mothers who feel isolated.

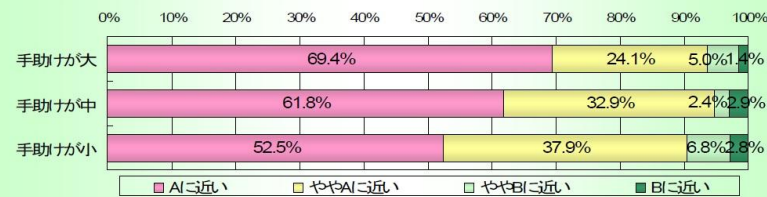
周囲からの手助け状況と子育てのイメージ

○子育て層(女性)の子育てに対するイメージ

※ A:子育ては楽しい、B:子育ては辛い



※ A:子どもを持つことで親も成長する、B:子どもを持つことで親は可能性を制約される



資料:財団法人こども未来財団「子育てに関する意識調査」(2004年) 2

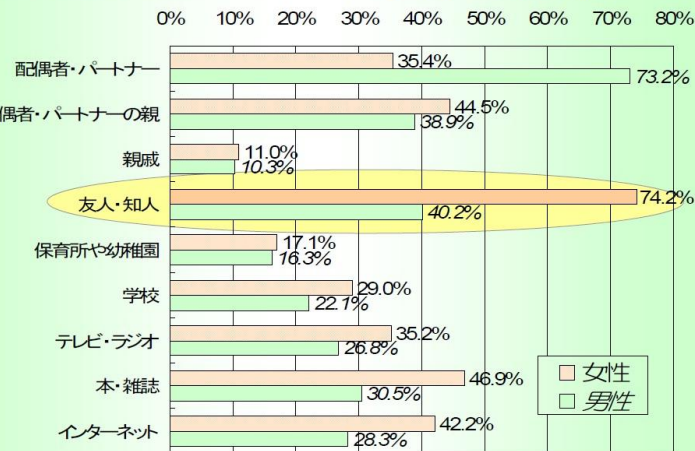
1. Help Received from People in Your Surroundings and Impressions of Child Rearing
2. Impressions of child rearing by people (women) raising children
A: Find child rearing enjoyable, B: Find child rearing arduous
3. Receive lots of help
Receive moderate help
Receive minimal help
4. Close to A
Somewhat close to A
Somewhat close to B
Close to B
5. A: Parents can also grow by having children, B: Having children constrains the parent's potential
6. Receive lots of help
Receive moderate help
Receive minimal help
7. Close to A
Somewhat close to A
Somewhat close to B
Close to B
8. Source: Survey of Attitudes on Child Rearing by the Children's Future Foundation (2004)

Do parents also feel that they can grow by having children? Or do they have the perception that having children acts as a constraint on them? Regarding this issue, mothers who receive lots of help oftentimes express the positive view that parents can grow together with them, whereas those who receive minimal help see their own potential gradually disappearing.

As for sources of information regarding child rearing, in short this asks who do mothers and fathers turn to to get information about child rearing? At present, television, radio, and books turned up in lots of the answers. But the most prevalent response was word-of-mouth in which they obtain information from friends and acquaintances. The men receive information from their partners or spouses, which is information that the mothers have heard by word-of-mouth. Simply put, men don't read any books, they only get their information from their wives.

子育てに関する情報源

○子育てに関する情報や知識を何から得ているか(複数回答、主な回答を抜粋)



資料:財団法人こども未来財団「子育てに関する意識調査」(2004年) 3

9. Sources of Information regarding Child Rearing

10. From where do you receive your information and knowledge regarding child rearing? (Multiple answers, excerpts of main answers)

11. Spouse / partner

My parents or the parents of my spouse / partner

Relatives

Friends / acquaintances

Day care centers / kindergarten

School

Television / radio

Books / magazines

Internet

12. Female

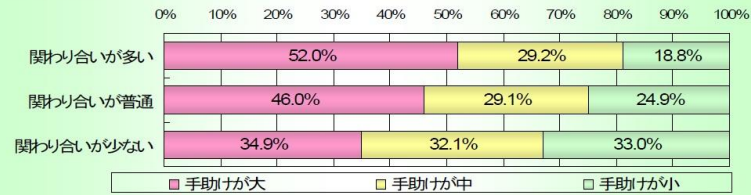
Male

13. Source: Survey of Attitudes on Child Rearing by the Children's Future Foundation (2004)

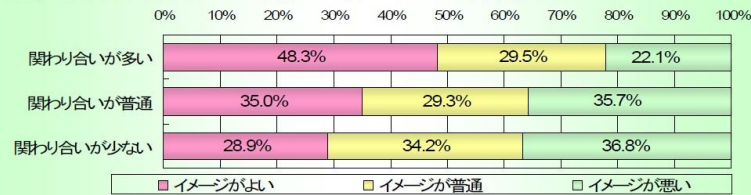
In terms of the involvement of neighborhood adults from when they themselves were children, those women who feel that they currently receive a lot of help say that when they were children there was a great deal of involvement from others. Therefore, mothers who were raised with the involvement of others tend to be more involved in their parent's generation. When it comes to child rearing and the involvement of neighborhood adults, middle and high school students raised with the involvement of adults in their surroundings have exceptionally good impressions regarding child rearing. However, those children who are in middle and high school and who did not experience much involvement from adults in their surroundings during their elementary and middle school years have a bad impression of child rearing.

子どもの頃の近所の大人との関わり合い

○子どもの頃の近所の大人との関わり合いと子育てにおける周囲の手助けの現状
(子育て層)



○近所の大人との関わり合いと子育てに対するイメージ(中高校生)



資料:財団法人こども未来財団「子育てに関する意識調査」(2004年)

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1. Involvement of Neighborhood Adults from When You Were a Child
2. Involvement of neighborhood adults from when you were a child and the current status of the help you receive with child rearing from your surroundings (People raising children)
3. Lots of involvement
Average involvement
Minimal involvement
4. Receive lots of help
Receive moderate help
Receive minimal help
5. Involvement from adults in the neighborhood and impressions of child rearing (Middle and high school students)
6. Lots of involvement
Average involvement
Minimal involvement
7. Good impression
Average impression
Bad impression
8. Source: Survey of Attitudes on Child Rearing by the Children's Future Foundation (2004)

If we were to combine all of this together we would find that when it comes to the environment in which future generations are raised, people who receive lots of support from their surroundings come to have a positive image of child rearing. Moreover, friends and acquaintances are the greatest source of knowledge and information on child rearing. Those people who experienced lots of involvement from adults when they were children now go about raising their children with a great deal of support from their surroundings. The more involvement from adults middle and high school students experience the more positive an impression they have of child rearing. Therefore, as it is often claimed that “it takes a village to raise a child,” if the village (local community) fails to engage in child rearing itself then people will stop having children. In the sense of fostering future generations, as things now stand young people, especially mothers, tend to have an extremely negative impression of child rearing, which I believe is vividly illustrated through the statistics.

For this reason, there is a strong tendency for children who were raised with the involvement of lots of people to have families and raise the next generation when they themselves become adults. Preventing isolation when it comes to child rearing does not just have an impact on the

mother's care, it also affects the grandchild's generation and subsequent generations. Therefore it is extremely important that this be carried out by the local community as a whole.

Cycle of Raising the Next Generation

- ◆ Those who receive lots of help from the people around them have a positive impression of child rearing
- ◆ The largest sources of information regarding child rearing are “Friends / acquaintances”
- ◆ Those who were raised with the involvement of lots of adults when they were children receive a lot of support from the people around them in raising their children now
- ◆ The more adults are involved with middle and high school students the more positive of an impression they have of child rearing

Support with Child Rearing from the Local Community

Next I will talk about initiatives that Inabe is conducting by trying to get the local community involved in supporting child rearing. As part of this we are trying to get as many high risk parents and children as possible to make their debut to the local community. This means that uninterrupted support aimed at all mothers and children is important from before children are born until they are three years old. This is designed to bring as many people as possible into contact with them, including public health nurses and nursery school teachers, supporters, volunteers, and more.

As for the content and goals of this initiative, naturally individual instruction is also provided. Then from there we periodically make door-to-door visits to ascertain the health of the mothers and children and their home environments. Of course, such determinations are also necessary for the previously mentioned elderly people as well. I feel that it is important to start by making these determinations so that the city hall can become aware of any problems. So while it is necessary to connect up those in serious condition with experts, on the whole there is also a need act as a go-between in striving to have them make their debut to the community in their local communities.

There are two ways to do this, to be specific. Ultimately my hope is that the local communities will be reinvigorated to a greater extent to the point where they can carry out their own independent activities. But before heading in that direction we will first provide centralized support at Child Rearing Support Centers aimed at children from zero to two years of age that will be led by the city hall. In our city all of the children who are three years old and older are in nursing care, and so they all go to nursery schools. Therefore, parents and their children can freely participate from ages zero to two. Volunteer supporters who we call Child Rearing Support Teams are also found at these places in order to get mothers and especially fathers to make their debut to the community. But we can only set up one or two such support centers in each middle school district. This is a manpower issue. For this reason, we are also undertaking activities that we call Traveling Child Parks that travel to areas located far away from these permanent installations.

In addition, parents also interact with one another and with these supporters. Then we started wondering whether ultimately we couldn't have the community take part in child rearing through the use of community centers within local communities. In other words, we thought it would be ideal to achieve the rejuvenation of the local community through the approach of child raising, but so far this has only been done at one of the 119 community councils. This

council is truly a leader. While a number of different problems surfaced with the senior citizen clubs mentioned a little ways back, our problem is one of leaders. On the questionnaire, 80% of the people said that they would offer help if requested to do so. Yet the number of people who would take the initiative on their own for trying to get something started is extremely small. That's why nobody wants to assume the role of chairman in the senior citizen's club associations as well. People will lend their support but nobody wants to take on the role of chairman, and so they never grow all that large.

The same holds true for child rearing. It is quite difficult to find people who take the mentality that they will assume the top position and provide leadership. However, the majority of people will make an effort to help out in some way if they are asked to do so. Therefore, we will have these people come to the nursery schools or Child Rearing Support Centers in a manner which gets them involved, which for the time being will be in the form of the Child Rearing Support Teams. As such, our activities are oriented towards having any leaders that are among them carry out activities independently once such people emerge.

Incidentally, the enrollment rate for the community councils is 75%. This has fallen five points over the past five years. The community council enrollment rate is dropping on account of apartment groups for factory workers and others. But they are close to handling independent activities, such as in the form of health education focusing mainly on the senior citizen councils. We call them health leaders, and they have turned up in about 40 locations. Independent activities that we call health development activities have surfaced at 40 of the 119 community councils, in which they have participants engage in physical exercises to maintain their health once or twice a week. With regard to disaster prevention, voluntary disaster prevention organizations have also surfaced.

But these are considerably difficult when it comes to child rearing, and so as of yet only one such location has been set up. But we are working to address this from a number of approaches, such as by soliciting volunteers out of our belief that it would be ideal to have this lead to revitalizing the regional community.

(3) Presentation Yuko Yoshida, Mayor of Osakasayama City

Osakasayama is a small city with a population of 58,000 people and an area of 11.8 km² that is located about 25 minutes away from Namba.

Currently, the aging of the population is steadily proceeding apace in the city. The region of Sayama New Town that was formed about 40 years ago has an extremely high rate of population aging at 21.2% for the city as a whole. But the elderly people in the region have been playing a central role in the subject that I am about to relate to you, and have taken charge of urban development.

Establishment of the Urban Development University

First off, I would like you to take a look at the "Recruitment Call for Urban Development University Students." This is now in its sixth semester. This Urban Development University is being implemented out of the notion of "...hav[ing] city residents understand the current state of administration and work on civil activities by jointly tackling future problems with the administration in order for there to be urban development in Osakasayama City that is more solidly rooted in the residents." It starts by giving the students an idea of what sort of work the city hall does. As such, we are promoting this Urban Development University in order to receive views from our residents such as: "If that's the kind of work you have then I can do that," "I'll lend a hand," and "There's a more economical and better way to do this."

The lecturers are section manager-level personnel from the city hall. At first they were not very good at giving explanations, and everyone who listened in had a hard time understanding them. This university is being run by the Civil Activity Support Center, which is an incorporated non-profit organization (NPO), to which we have entrusted everything from the planning stage onward. This is an incorporated NPO organized by senior citizens called Osakasayama Active Aging that is comprised of many former salary men. It also contains people with experience as executives or in managerial positions at companies, and it is run with the notion of having these people train up the staff members. My hope is that such personnel will not just shut themselves up inside, but will venture out more and serve as personnel who work hard together with the residents. They've been saying that lately the personnel themselves have gotten up the self-confidence to give lectures.

Sixth Term (FY2010)

Osakasayama Civil Activity Support Center Recruitment Call for Urban Development University Students
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The new “urban development” is transforming into a cooperative urban development via the participation of city residents. It is necessary to have city residents understand the current state of administration and work on civil activities by jointly tackling future problems with the administration in order for there to be urban development in Osakasayama City that is more solidly rooted in the residents.

Urban Development University, which was set up for those residents who are active in the region, has administrative personnel from various sectors discuss the current status and future of the administrative work that they oversee, while also thinking about the future together with all of the students.

Urban Development University held its first term in April 2007, and just finished its fifth term last year, during which approximately 150 people have completed the course.

It is continuing on with recruiting students to attend its sixth term. Here is information on the university in order to encourage those people who are already involved in civil activities and those who would like to get involved in such activities in the future to take part.

- Time Saturday, June 12 to Saturday, December 11, 2010
Classes are held every Saturday morning, and facility tours are held on Friday afternoons
* See the schedule on the back of this sheet for information on times, course content, and so on.
- Place Civil Activity Support Center (second floor of the city hall's west wing) lecture hall, etc. (on the south side of SAYAKA Hall)
* This is the starting and ending point for the facility tours
- Attendance fee 2,000 yen (bus fare for facility tours and cost of materials)
- Attendance limit 40 people (first come first served basis)
- Applications Apply to the Civil Activity Support Center between Saturday, May 1 and Monday, May 31
* See the following page for the application outline

- Application Outline
 - (1) How to apply
Please apply by faxing or emailing us your name, postal code, address, age, telephone number, and experience with civil activities.
 - (2) Where to apply and direct inquiries
Osakasayama Civil Activity Support Center
1-862-5 Sayama, Osakasayama
589-0005
(On the south side of SAYAKA Hall)
FAX
Email
 - (3) Attendance reception
We will send you a reception certificate that lists your reception number.
Please bring this with you on the first day of class.
- Course Completion Requirements
 - (1) <Course structure> <Completion requirements>
 - 3 required classes Students must take the three classes
 - 15 general classes
 - 2 public classes Of which students must take 15 or more classes
 - 4 tour classes

To complete the course students must attend the three required classes and 15 or more of the 21 general, public, and tour classes. Those that do will be granted a certificate of completion by the mayor.
 - (2) Make Up Classes
In cases where students fail to meet the requirements for conferring a certificate of completion in (1), they can fulfill their total completion requirements to complete the course by taking make up classes for the classes they are missing in the next term (FY2013).

Urban Development University

Started (classes began) in April 2007

(Generally speaking, classes are held from 9:30 AM every Saturday, and one class lasts 90 minutes)

Sponsor: Civil Activity Support Center

(Conducted as an assisted project by Osakasayama Active Aging an incorporated NPO)

Keyword: Cooperation

Characteristics: This is a systematic course related to administration that is based on the traveling lecture system for lifelong learning.

Results: This course is conducive to building mutual understanding and trusting relationships, as well as reforming the attitudes and improving the quality of personnel, that are all essential for promoting urban development through cooperation with the city residents.

	Term period	No. of classes	Attendance limit	No. of students	No. of graduates
Term 1	April – September 2007	25	30 people	41 people	24 people
Term 2	October 2007 – February 2008	25	40 people	37 people	32 people
Term 3	April – September 2008	26	40 people	30 people	28 people
Term 4	October 2008 – March 2009	26	30 people	<u>30</u> people	<u>32</u> people
Term 5	June – December 2009	25	40 people	40 people	31 people
Term 6	June – December 2010	24	40 people	32 people	

- * Students who acquire a certain number of credits will be granted a certificate of completion by the Mayor of Osakasayama.
- * A system has been adopted whereby students who were unable to complete their coursework during the term are able to acquire a certificate of completion through make up classes, which has led to increases in the number of students (underlined).

First off, I would like you to take a look at its content. As you can see from the “Sixth Term Course Schedule for the Urban Development University,” this year the course will be held over seven months.

The first class in June is entitled “Urban Development Rooted in Residents.” This is a phrase that I held up as my credo when I first announced my candidacy for mayor eight years ago, and so I lecture for about 40 minutes on it. Then after that, sometimes teachers from universities, or the aforementioned section managers from city hall or people from the incorporated NPOs take over as the lecturer to give talks.

The Investigative Committee on Urban Development on urban development that was organized by graduates from the Urban Development University submitted a written request to the chairman of the city council regarding revitalizing the council. It consisted of calls to establish a Special Revitalization Committee in the city council to strive to further revitalize the council. There have also been recommendations from the investigative committee asking me to disclose information in a manner that is more easily understandable to the residents.

第6期 まちづくり大学 講座日程表

月 日 (土曜日)	時 間	講座⑩ 講座名	講 座 内 容	摘 要	講師・担当部署等
6月	12 9:30～10:10	開 講 式 ①特別講義	市民が起点のまちづくり	必修	・田友好大阪狭山市長
	10:10～11:00	オリエンテーション	まちづくり大学が目指すもの・受講要領・その他		市民活動支援センター
	19 13:30～15:00	②さやまの歴史	大阪狭山市の歴史(市史編さん、郷土資料を教材に)	一般	社会教育・スポーツ振興G
	15:00～16:30	③狭山池	狭山池の成り立ちと役割「府立狭山池博物館見学」	見学	
26	9:30～11:00	④市民活動支援 セミナー①	これからの市民によるまちづくり～参画と協働	公開	帝塚山大学大学院教授 中川 幾郎氏 会場 SAYAKA コンベンションホール
7月	3 9:30～11:00	⑤行政改革	行革と地方分権	一般	企画G
	10 9:30～11:00	⑥市民協働	福祉の公的サービスの溝に対する地域ネットワークの 必要性	必修	大阪府立大学准教授 小野 達也氏
	16 (金) 13:30～15:30	⑦上水道	上水道の仕組みと課題「浄水場見学」	見学	太満池浄水場 水道局施設 G
	24 9:30～11:00	⑧財 政	大阪狭山市財政の特徴と今年度予算の概要	一般	財政G
	31 9:30～11:00	⑨市民自治①	市民の側から市民自治を進める上で必要な コーディネイト力の向上を目指して「グループワーク」	必修	近畿大学教授 久 陸浩氏
8月	7 9:30～11:30	⑩前半まとめ	前半の受講を終わって ～市民協働について①理解 ②どこで③どんな分野で 活動するか、などを班単位グループワークで話し合い	一般	まちづくり研究会
9月	4 9:30～11:00	⑪議 会	市議会の仕組みと運営	一般	議会事務局
	11 9:30～11:30	⑫ごみ対策	ごみ処理とリサイクルの現状と課題(分別、減量対策)	一般	生活環境G
	17 (金) 13:00～17:00	⑬資源リサイクルと ごみ処理	資源リサイクル処理の仕組み「資源再生工場見学」 ごみ処理の仕組み「ごみ処理工場見学」	見学	資源再生工場(河南町) 南河内清掃工場(富田林)
	25 9:30～11:30	⑭防災、防犯	防災対策、自主防災組織、 防犯(地域防犯ステーション、青色パトロール)	一般	危機管理G 市民協働・生涯学習推進G
10月	2 9:30～11:00	⑮都市計画	大阪狭山市の都市計画 (都市計画の目的、都市計画区域、土地利用)	一般	都市計画G
	8 (金) 13:30～15:30	⑯下水道	下水処理の仕組みと課題「下水処理場見学」	見学	さやま水みらいセンター 下水道G
	16 9:30～11:30	⑰公園と道路	公園管理、道路管理の現状とこれから	一般	公園緑地G、土木G
	23 9:30～11:30	⑱子育て、教育	子育て支援、学校と地域社会の現状とこれから	一般	こども育成室、学校教育G 社会教育・スポーツ振興G
	30 9:30～11:30	⑲福 祉	地域福祉と高齢者福祉施策の現状とこれから 事例紹介:社会福祉協議会	一般	高齢介護G、福祉G、 社会福祉協議会
11月	6 9:30～11:00	⑳市民活動	市民公益活動、NPOの現状とこれから	一般	市民協働・生涯学習推進G
	13 9:30～11:30	21 官民協働事業	指定管理者制度と業務委託制度の現状とこれから 事例紹介:熟年いきいき実行委員会	一般	企画G 熟年いきいき実行委員会
	20 9:30～11:30	22 市民自治②	新しいまちづくり活動(円卓会議と自治会) 事例紹介:南中円卓会議の取り組み	一般	市民協働・生涯学習推進G 南中円卓会議
	27 9:30～11:00	23 市民活動支援 セミナー②	円卓会議と行政～これからのまちづくり推進体制のあり方～	公開	近畿大学教授 久 陸浩氏 会場 SAYAKA 大会議室
12月	4 9:30～12:00	24 全講座を終えて～ まとめ	全講座を終わって ～これから自身が取り組む協働テーマについて～ テーマ別グループに分れて「グループワーク」	一般	まちづくり研究会
	11 9:30～10:00 10:00～12:00	修 了 式 まちづくり研究会	市長挨拶 修了証書授与 他 まちづくり研究会への入会案内		市民活動支援センター

- Sixth Term Course Schedule for the Urban Development University
- Date (Saturday)
- Time
- Class name
- Class content
- Outline
- Lecturer / responsible department, etc.
- June
- 9:30 – 10:10
- 10:10 – 11:00
- (1) Opening ceremony
- Special lecture
- Orientation
- Urban Development Rooted in Residents
- Urban Development University's Goals, attendance outline, and so on
- Required
- Yuko Yoshida, Mayor of Osakasayama City
- Civil Activity Support Center
- (2) History of Sayama
- (3) Sayama Pond

15. The History of Osakasayama (Using Compilations of the City's History and Local Documents as Teaching Materials)
- Composition and Roles of Sayama Pond (Tour of Osaka Prefectural Sayamaike Museum)
16. General
- Tour
17. Social Education and Sports Promotion Group
18. (4) Civil Activity Support seminar (1)
19. Future Urban Development by the Residents: Participation and Cooperation
20. Public
21. Ikuro Nakagawa, Graduate School Professor at Tezukayama University
- Venue: SAYAKA Convention Hall
22. July
23. (5) Administrative and fiscal reforms
24. Administrative Reforms and Decentralization
25. Planning Group
26. (6) Civil cooperation
27. The Need for Regional Networks for Channels for Public Services for Welfare
28. Tatsuya Ono, Associate Professor at Osaka Prefecture University
29. (7) Water supply
30. Water Supply Mechanisms and Challenges "Tour of a Purification Plant"
31. Tamaike Water Purification Plant
- Waterworks Department Facilities Group
32. (8) Financial affairs
33. Features of Financial Administration in Osakasayama and an Overview of the Current Fiscal Year's Budget
34. Financial Affairs Group
35. (9) Civil local autonomy (1)
36. 'Group Work' Aimed at Boosting the Coordinating Capacity Needed to Promote Civilian Local Autonomy from the Resident Side
37. Takahiro Hisa, Professor at Kinki University
38. (10) First half wrap-up
39. Conclusion of the first half of classes
- The students get into individual groups for group work to discuss (1) their understanding of civil cooperation, as well as (2) where and (3) in what fields such activities are carried out
40. Investigative Committee on Urban Development
41. August
42. September
43. (11) Assembly
44. Structure and Operation of the City Council
45. City Council Secretariat
46. (12) Waste countermeasures
47. Current Status of and Challenges for Waste Disposal and Recycling
48. Living Environment Group
49. (13) Resource recycling and waste disposal
50. Mechanism for Resource Recycling and Disposal "Tour of a Resource Recycling Plant"
- Mechanism for Waste Disposal "Tour of a Waste Disposal Plant"
51. Resource recycling plant (Kanan Town)
- Disposal plant inside Kanan (Tondabayashi)
52. (14) Disaster and crime prevention
53. Disaster Countermeasures, Voluntary Disaster Prevention Organizations, and Crime Prevention (Local Crime Prevention Stations, Blue Patrols)
54. Crisis Management Group
- Social Education and Sports Promotion Group
55. October
56. (15) Urban planning
57. Osakasayama Urban Planning (Goals of Urban Planning, Urban Planning Districts, and Land Use)
58. City Planning Group
59. (16) Sewage
60. Mechanism for and Challenges of Wastewater Treatment (Tour of a Wastewater Treatment Plant)
61. Sayama Future Water Center

- Sewage Group
62. (17) Parks and roads
 63. Current State and Future of Park Management and Road Management
 64. Park and Green Spaces Group, Civil Engineering Group
 65. (18) Child rearing and education
 66. Current State and Future of Child Rearing Support and Schools/Local Communities
 67. Children's Education Office, School Education Group
 - Social Education and Sports Promotion Group
 68. (19) Welfare
 69. Current State and Future of Community Welfare and Elderly Welfare Facilities
 - Introduction of a Case Example: Social Welfare Council
 70. Elderly Nursing Care Group, Welfare Group, Social Welfare Council
 71. November
 72. (20) Civil activities
 73. Current State and Future of Activities that Benefit Residents and NPOs
 74. Civil Cooperation and Lifelong Learning Promotion Group
 75. (21) Public-private cooperation projects
 76. Current State and Future of the Designated Manager System and the Work Outsourcing System
 - Introduction of a Case Example: Executive Committee for an Active Senior Life
 77. Planning Group
 - Executive Committee for an Active Senior Life
 78. (22) Civil autonomy
 79. New Urban Development Activities (Round Table Councils and Community Councils)
 - Introduction of a Case Example: The Minamichu Round Table Council
 80. Civil Cooperation and Lifelong Learning Promotion Group
 - Round Table Councils
 81. (23) Civil Activity Support seminar (2)
 82. Round Table Councils and Administration: Modalities for the Urban Development Promotion Structure in the Future
 83. Takahiro Hisa, Professor at Kinki University
 - Venue: SAYAKA Large Conference Room
 84. December
 85. (24) Full course completion and wrap-up
 86. Full Course Completion
 - Cooperation themes the students will address in the future –
 - Group work where the students are divided up into groups by theme
 87. Investigative Committee on Urban Development
 88. Completion ceremony
 89. Investigative Committee on Urban Development
 90. Address by the mayor, conferral of certificates of completion, etc.
 91. Information on joining the Investigative Committee on Urban Development
 92. Civil Activity Support Center

Launch of Round Table Councils on Urban Development

In the November 20 row there is an entry on “New Urban Development Activities (Round Table Councils and Community Councils).” These round table councils are a new technique for urban development that was created by Osakasayama two years ago under which middle school districts have been given the authority to compose budgets of 5 million yen. These meetings bring executives from the community councils found in each middle school district together with activists working on particular themes to the same table to shed light on challenges facing the region. They then go about determining what sorts of methods to employ in order to solve these challenges, and decide on how they should use their budget of 5 million yen in order to do so. These consist almost entirely of elderly people and women. In some middle school districts they issue official publications four times a year which are distributed door to door. Within these publications information is introduced on things like the status of activities by each of the community councils, as well as incorporated NPOs and

volunteer groups that are active on particular themes, such as child rearing and the elderly. Unique people from the region are introduced in biographical columns, and appeals for projects that they are working on are made through these official publications as well. Moreover, one of these middle school districts contains the Kinki University Faculty of Medicine Affiliated Hospital, which is a major hospital. So the district planted flowers along the two kilometer-plus stretch of road leading up to the hospital, built a cafe salon, and created a space where handicapped and elderly people can gather. The students at Urban Development University also learn about the basics of this round table meeting initiative.

Activities by the Investigative Committee on Urban Development

Next up is the Investigative Committee on Urban Development. People who have completed the Urban Development University are divided up into five separate subcommittees based upon areas that they excel in or that they have an interest in, and in their subcommittees they once again brush up on their studies. They also offer recommendations to the city, or undertake new initiatives on their own accord. The Subcommittee on the Environment played a central role in sponsoring a symposium on the theme of reducing the weight of garbage, while also serving as a leader in promoting said weight reductions.

In addition, members of the Subcommittee on Municipal Disaster Prevention worked to popularize household fire alarms by negotiating with the manufacturers over being able to purchase the devices in bulk so that they could sell them to residents at an affordable price. There are also lots of motorcycles and vehicles and so forth at Honda Technical College Kansai, which is a technical school located in the city. This school also has a dorm residency system, and so the dorms are equipped with baths and dining halls. So residents held an interview with the school principal, and concluded an agreement with the city over assistance for when disasters occur in which they negotiated for use of the school's facilities and equipment during critical situations. What is more, the members of this subcommittee also went to supermarkets and negotiated the conclusion of agreements whereby they would put a hold on food and water and stop selling them if an earthquake struck, so that the city was free to make use of these supplies.

Investigative Committee on Urban Development

○ Launched: October 2007

○ Eligible for Participation: Graduates of the Urban Design University

○ Purposes:

- 1) To instantiate research on urban development and planning and activities for cooperative projects
- 2) To cultivate the human resources needed to promote civil cooperation
- 3) To provide the human resources that are lacking in civil activity organizations that promote civil cooperation
- 4) To act as a place for amity

○ Management Configuration (Sharing of Roles)

- 1) Study groups → voluntary management (subcommittee activities form the basis)
- 2) Civil Activity Support Centers → Management support (providing conference rooms, assisting with management fees, publicity support, acting as a pipeline to the administration, advice with management in general, etc.)
- 3) Administration → Responds to the proposals for cooperative projects from the study groups (advice, providing information, consultations, etc.)

○ Current State of Activities by the Subcommittees

- (1) Subcommittee on the Environment = Living Environment Group: 17 people
 - Deploying a campaign aiming to reduce the weight of garbage
 - Held a symposium to think about reducing the weight of garbage in Osakasayama
 - Considering measures to drastically raise resident awareness of the 3Rs (reduce, reuse, recycle)
- (2) Subcommittee on Municipal Disaster Prevention: 18 people
 - Activities to popularize the installation of fire alarms (installed 4,400 devices in 2,200 households) = Fire Fighting Head Office
 - Donations of child safety vests (500 vests) = Social Education and Sports Promotion Group
 - Intermediation with the conclusion of agreements related to relief activities when disasters occur between businesses within the city and the city = Crisis Management Group
- (3) Subcommittee on Welfare and Nursing Care: 7 people
 - Understanding the actual state of nursing care activities = Touring hospitals and other facilities in the city
- (4) Subcommittee on Civil Liberties and Education: 13 people
 - Providing a menu of extracurricular subjects to children engaged in mandatory education
 - Launch of tri-part sessions on the Confucian Analects, English, and *rakugo* storytelling
 - English instruction support groups established for fifth and sixth graders at elementary schools (Osakasayama Association to Support English Activities at Elementary Schools, an Incorporated NPO) = School Education Group

- (5) Subcommittee on Urban Planning, Administration, and Finance: 18 people
 - Survey on the degree to which information is disclosed (compared with other cities) = General Affairs Group
 - Participation in civil councils
 - Consultations over the formulation of the Fourth Comprehensive Plan = Planning Group
 - Consultations over the formulation of the Urban Development Master Plan = Urban Planning Group
 - Participation in the Urban Development Round Table Councils (in middle school districts) = Civil Cooperation and Lifelong Learning Promotion Group
- Presentations to Announce the Results of Studies
 - (1) Internal presentations → presentations regarding the activities of each subcommittee aimed at everyone on the study groups (once annually)
 - (2) Presentations to announce each specific research theme → presentations to divisions whose cooperation is desired (as needed)
 - (3) Presentations to people who have completed the Urban Development University → Invitation to join the subcommittees (once annually)
- Management committee via representatives from the subcommittees (once every month)

As for the fourth one, the Subcommittee on Civil Liberties and Education, it will make English mandatory for fifth and sixth grade elementary school students starting from April of next year. This subcommittee lists former middle school English teachers and officials of the English proficiency examination among its members. As such, a decision was reached to have them launch an incorporated NPO with about 20 residents who excel at English, including former flight attendants on international flights and pronunciation teachers. They would then travel around offering assistance to elementary school teachers starting from next year. Of course, foreigners and native speakers such as Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs) and language advice supporters will also take part. We will have them take part in support activities in which homeroom teachers will persistently play a leading role, such as in intermediating between foreigners who do not speak Japanese and the many elementary school teachers who are not that good at English. Since it is an incorporated NPO, it will proceed by means of concluding an agreement with the city and outsourcing administrative work. This initiative has already been in place on a trial basis at elementary schools since September of this year. In addition, at another initiative called English Camp we gather together about 30 sixth grade students who have fun at camp while communicating only in English. These are the sorts of initiatives that have come from the Investigative Committee on Urban Development

Next is the fifth subcommittee, the Subcommittee on Urban Planning, Administration, and Finance. Since we are in the midst of working on the Urban Planning Master Plan, this subcommittee has come to play a central role in the city council on urban planning. As I mentioned a little while ago, the Urban Development Round Table Councils work to resolve challenges in the communities, and so they provide proposals to the people on the Investigative Committee on Urban Development, and therefore have come to play a central role here as well.

In the future, the members of the Investigative Committee on Urban Development will keep an eye on the administration indirectly from the point of view of the residents, just like you see in Europe. They will presumably undertake a sort of ombudsman-like role.

No matter how you look at it, the Urban Development University is being positioned as the foundation for creating local leaders and the leaders for civil activities, and we will have the leaders emerging from here broadly spread various different activities. The Urban Development Round Table Councils in the middle school districts currently have a budgetary framework of 5 million yen, but in the future I would like to increase this amount to 10 million yen or maybe even more. Furthermore, I would like to establish an ordinance for enforcing current guidelines, and give them not only the authority to compile a budget, but also enable them to enforce these on their own.

So for this sake, we will have the Round Table Councils get certified as incorporated NPOs and have them acquire corporate status. Then, if we take purchasing 100 yen ball-point pens as an example, while the city has to purchase these from designated contractors, if they get certified as incorporated NPOs then we can hand them grants so that they can purchase even cheaper pens from 100-yen stores and so on. This is just one example of how we can cut down on their costs and get them to feel a sense of satisfaction by increasing their range of freedom.

On top of this, I would also like to see graduates of the Urban Development University continue to spread support measures still further so as to ensure that civil activities suited to the people are carried out in the region. An example of this would be having the Round Table Councils undertake activities related to disaster and crime prevention, as well as health schemes such as boosting the examination rate for cancer screenings as a measure to combat cancer.

(4) Presentation Mayor Katsunobu Sakurai from Minamisoma City

With regards to the theme of community regeneration, I would like to report on my own city's initiatives and current status, while also hearing your opinions.

To begin with, the reason I raised my hand for this theme is because—just like with the first theme—problems from the aging of the population are proceeding apace. Our city was merged on January 1, 2006. Through the merger of the 48,000 people from the former city of Haramachi, the 13,000 people from the town of Odaka, and the 12,000 people from the town of Kashima we grew to our current size of about 71,000 people. In addition, the city has an area of 400 square kilometers, more than about half of which is comprised of forest area. Geographically the city is located almost exactly between the cities of Sendai and Iwaki, and faces the Pacific Ocean.

One thing that I would be happy if I could impress upon you is that our city features the Soma Nomaoui (Wild Horse Racing) Festival, which is one of the leading festivals throughout the country. Each year for three days starting from July 23 about 500 horsemen mounted on horses hold a festival that as far as I know is the only one of its kind throughout Japan. It has been featured on NHK and other media outlets.

Holding of Informal Community Meetings

Now then, in such a city I feel that the first problem at hand is the question of how must we go about addressing the simultaneous rejuvenation and regeneration of local communities. Presently, the average aging rate is over 26%, and the aging of the population is advancing

precipitously throughout the whole city. We refer to what are commonly called community councils as administrative districts, where the city has stationed administrative entrustees. There are a total of 180 such administrative districts, including 101 in Haramachi District, 39 in Odaka District, and 40 in Kashima District. The aging rate throughout the city is surging by leaps and bounds, and depending on the administrative district there are some that have aging rates that exceed 39%. Even in rural towns like our city, two cases of people dying alone occurred in regions with high rates of aging in the previous fiscal year. And so as Mayor Ikeda said, questions like how to go about looking out for such people and checking on them have become a major theme.

In the rural districts on the outskirts of the city the connections between the respective communities still remain. But the reality is that the further downtown you go the more the number of people living in apartments increases, with troubles over waste and various other problems arising from such areas. I have been heading out to local communities and holding informal community meetings for about two hours in each community to find out how to work towards regenerating communities, and how each of the communities among the 180 administrative districts are being sustained. At the same time, this is also being done out of a sense of determining what specific sorts of problems exist in each community. I would like to make it around to about 50 sites each year at the minimum, and at present I have made it to 35 sites. Though the number of participants differs in each region, I have been able to hold direct discussions with about 800 residents.

Along with this aging of the population comes a tendency to rely on the administration when it comes to sustaining communities. For example, with respect to how we should handle weeding work for municipal road improvements, while this by rights had been handled within the community thus far, as people grow older it simultaneously gets harder to do this, and so they tend to rely on the city. Given these circumstances, I am holding these informal meetings in each community by leaving the themes open to them in order to discuss how we should go about getting people to participate.

Current State of the Aging of the Population

Yet even as we bandy about terms like community regeneration and rejuvenation, the trend of falling birthrates coupled with the aging of the population has not been halted. If this were to be expressed in population composition data—and I apologize for this being overall data—but there are 6,500 people between ages 0 and 9, 6,700 people in their teens, 6,500 people in their 20s, 8,800 people in their 30s, 7,800 people in their 40s, 15,000 people in their 50s, 13,000 people in their 60s, 8,000 people in their 70s, 5,200 people in their 80s, 800 people in their 90s, and 25 people who are 100 years old or older. The reality is that the number of people increases overwhelmingly from the people in their 50s and older. In the midst of this, judging by our idea that local people must start taking over for areas that the administration has been responsible for thus far and the current state of the aging of the population on the other side of this, as things currently stand it will not necessarily be possible for the region to absorb the impact from this. How we should go about getting the residents to take part in this together with us in the future by matching them with the administration and also gaining their consent is something that I worry about. The balance on our city's municipal bond is about 60 billion yen, and so we must adopt this as an approach in carrying out fiscal reconstruction. Yet at the same time the methods we have adopted thus far are already becoming untenable, which is a fact that I always bring up at the informal meetings. We will continue to get a firm hold on the requests and opinions offered by the residents. And with regard to those projects that we absolutely must carry out, we will deploy measures by soundly ranking them in order of priority. Conversely, we must ask for their patience with respect to problems that do not necessarily have to be tackled right away. For problems that we have absolutely no way of

handling due to our financial circumstances, I feel that there is no other option but to tell the residents that we just can't handle them. Even so, it is incredibly difficult for me to tell the residents that. I feel that in order for us to push forward with administration in the future, with respect to resident participation it will be necessary to have the residents do what they can of their own accord.

Reconsidering the Shape of Regional Governments and the National Government

As a result of the merger the 900 or so personnel from back then has dropped to nearly 300 people overall, and so our administrative human resources are decreasing. Some areas are being supplemented with a tiny number of nominal or commissioned human resources. But our administrative capacity has fallen off to such an extent that unless city residents participate then we will no longer be able to handle certain areas that the administration has been responsible for thus far.

On this account, we are currently being faced with streamlining our administration as a matter of course, but I also feel that we are approaching a period in which the shape of the national government must also be altered as well. Therefore, we must move in a direction of delivering information on the financial condition and administration of our city to the residents, based upon which said residents can lend their participation by thinking about those aspects that they should be considering. I feel that the conventional configuration of populist leaders going about getting elected just by claiming that they would provide administrative services has already started disappearing in a sense, especially in local communities. As the shape of the national government has been changing, then questions over what should be done about modalities for grants and those for the respective subsidies have become important challenges for us. Yet at the same time I believe that the most significant theme is what we should be doing from our standpoint. Throughout this, I feel that the aging of the population that was raised as a theme a little while ago has kicked off an era in which we must put our heads together with local residents to think up ways in which we can give rise to healthy senior citizens, while at the same time formulating areas that the residents can handle without relying on the administration in regards to the relationship between medical care, nursing care, and welfare.

From the discussions thus far I have heard lots of informative views, as the aging of the population is also becoming an enormous problem in urban areas as well. I think that the issue of having to produce healthy elderly people in urban areas is the same as producing healthy elderly people in local regions. Especially when it comes to agricultural areas, to be honest with you there is no such thin as a retirement age for people who have worked in agriculture. I would be grateful if I could get you to recognize the fact that, since there is only the national pension scheme and the beneficiaries of this scheme oversee the agricultural industry, this scheme is what underpins local agriculture and by extension the country of Japan.

If this were to crumble all at one go, then Japanese agriculture and food issues would be faced with quite serious problems. When you take into account this sense that we are currently reaching such territory, you can see that this is the time that we must actively strive to regenerate regions and communities. I would like to continue thinking about what should be done about this by exchanging opinions with all of you.

(5) Exchanges of Opinions

- We established play centers in order to encourage interaction between parents. We rented community centers, filled them with about 500,000 yen's-worth of toys and equipment for children to play with, stationed a single instructor in them, and reached out to

neighborhood mothers who are currently raising children and mothers who do not leave their children at nursery school. But only three such centers have been set up in our city. This is because it seems that young mothers are not all that adept when it comes to raising children communally in groups, and so the idea hasn't caught on because they would prefer to stay at home.

- (Mayor of Inabe City) First of all, it is best to invite healthy and sound parents and children. There are also some high risk parents and children, and these should be invited by intermixing them in with the sound parents and children. If you only reach out to those that are high risk then they will start to wonder why they were the only ones invited. Therefore you should start by inviting people who are truly personable and sociable. Then you can reach out to the high risk people to get them to come to Christmas parties or birthday parties, or whatever by saying, "Why don't you spend some time with these people?" I feel that it is important to get them connected in one way or another.
- (Mayor of Inabe City) Mental care for the mother is given the utmost emphasis at each stage from prior to birth until they enter the workforce. All of the babies are visited by professionals in the form of public health nurses. They go to have a look at the children's' health conditions, and they also have a look at the mothers' health conditions. This is to ensure that they don't develop any neuroses from child rearing. Recently there have been numerous cases of child abuse. There have also been cases that appear to be murder-suicides. In order to ensure that these do not occur, we have decided that we will get in contact with them in some form or another about six times before the child reaches four years of age. Those people that come to the Child Rearing Support Centers are fine. These types of people are healthy. Simply put it is the high risk people who don't come to these, because they are isolated. There is no other way with these people other than to track them down, and so it's best to visit as wide a range of people as possible so as to enable them to connect with the community. Administrations must focus in primarily on high risk people.
- (Mayor of Osakasayama City) The Civil Activity Support Center is an incorporated NPO that carries out its activities through about 20 people. All of these people are retirees who are over 65 years old. The majority of them are veteran salary men and salary women. The attendance limit for the Urban Development University of 40 people is a pretty small number of people, and so there is the idea of bringing them into contact with municipal employee and residents so that each of their faces are visible. This is a proposal that we have received straight from those at this incorporated NPO.

The support center's job is essentially to collect information on the people who are engaged in various different civil activities. And it also gathers information for people who would like to try something so that they can say, "Well if this is your area of expertise or the area you would like to try something in, then we have these sorts of options. Here is the contact information." It offers consultations from 9:00 AM to 10:00 PM almost every day of the year. This was something that could only be done once it was spun off away from the municipal agencies.

- (Mayor of Osakasayama City) When I was appointed mayor the Civil Activity Support Center was ensconced within the city's organizational structure. But in order to switch over to an arrangement whereby residents support one another, we decided to spin this off from the city hall organization and outsource the work. This was entrusted to them in a manner whereby work was outsourced to volunteer groups lacking incorporated NPO status. They then had the idea that they wanted to increase the number of their associates and the

number of people with a desire to carry out urban development activities, so the support center called for an attempt to set up the Urban Development University, and so it was established. It was not something that the administration requested that they set up.

- (Mayor of Osakasayama City) There are personnel overseeing the local communities in three middle school districts, and these personnel absolutely must attend the council. For example, in one middle school district a community cafe project will be carried out. In this case they are renting a tenant building, and so rent, a security deposit, and key money are all needed, and furnishings and fixtures will have to be arranged. This will be covered by the city's budget. This will be proposed to the council, and we will tell them, "In order to do this sort of project in middle school district so and so, we must have furnishings and fixtures, a security deposit, and so on." Then once approval is given we will go ahead with implementing it.

But ultimately I would like to transition to an approach whereby the Urban Development Round Table Councils acquire incorporated NPO status and hand out grants worth 5 million yen or 10 million yen, or whatever. They will report on their accounts by undergoing auditing as they do so, which will also be reported to the council.

- (Mayor of Ikeda City) In Ikeda we allocate 70 million yen, or 1% of the municipal tax, to 11 elementary school districts. Therefore, we hand over to them the authority to compile and request a budget of from 6 to 7 million yen. So the local communities can choose what they want to do within a range of 7 million yen. For the time being, these budgets are compiled by having the Financial Affairs Division audit them. We have set up a ledger item for decentralization expenses within the general affairs expenses in which we have budgeted everything. So requests to do such and such with education, or to do so and so as part of the park expenses will be incorporated into this.
- This city is also currently considering local autonomy cooperatives at the level of elementary school districts, but our concerns are over whether candidates to serve as chairmen and officials will emerge, and whether there are enough people in each region to handle this. There is also the concern that there will not be any candidates in the end, and so someone who by nature is like a local boss will be the chairman every year and will go about personally taking everything for themselves, or seizing control to an excessive degree.
- (Mayor of Osakasayama City) The selection of the Urban Development Round Table Council officials has been left entirely up to the local regions and districts. There has been absolutely no movement from our side, and so currently the residents are discussing this amongst themselves and will come to a conclusion in the end.
- My goal was to hold 50 informal gatherings in communities for two hours in each location each year. At first I thought this would be alright, but now I'm thinking that perhaps this can't go on. Currently, I have been going around to the elementary school districts once a month, 11 times a year. The reason why this can no longer go on is because only the maniacs are left. So in that sense, I'm starting to think that rather than going around 50 times, it would be more sustainable to do this in a more detailed manner from the outset by easing up to some extent and holding these once a year at the elementary school district level.
- During my first election I also promised my constituents that I would hold 1,000 informal meetings with them. I held about 2,000 of these, but then I was told by members of the city

council that gathering the views of the local communities was their job, and that if the mayor were to travel all around listening to the people then they would be out of work. So now I decided that I would head out to the local communities about once a month.

(6) Conclusion Shigemitsu Hosoe, Mayor of Gifu City

I would like to thank you all for the incredibly spirited debate we had here today.

From the Mayor of Inabe City we heard proposals and a presentation for striving to revitalize local communities through child rearing—via child rearing through the full efforts of the entire community—which could also offer countermeasures to falling birthrates.

From the Mayor of Osakasayama City we heard a report on promoting urban planning in the form of the Urban Development University. He also noted that this is an effort to revitalize cities by obtaining a variety of different benefits, such as reforming the attitudes of municipal personnel and publicly disclosing information.

Then from the Mayor of Minamisoma we heard a talk on how we should aim to revitalize communities by holding dialogues with them.

And finally we also had debates over topics such as support funds for regional revitalization that you all brought up for discussion.

I believe that there are various different methodologies when it comes to vitalizing each respective region. But it will be those of us in the local governments that will be the ones to undertake this over the course of the decentralization reforms and regional sovereignty reforms that are to come. As such, it will be necessary to ensure that the local communities are healthy, because this cannot be borne entirely by the administration's capacity. Therefore, this is an extremely important theme. The theme of community revitalization is closely connected with that of welfare for the elderly, which was our first theme. In some cases I believe that the elderly have come to account for a considerable number of the people taking responsibility for local communities.

Through this meeting I would like to study up on various issues and use this as reference for new measures and so forth in the future. Furthermore, I hope that this will serve as an opportunity for us to learn from one another by presenting the new ideas and various different measures that you have been implementing on this occasion.

I would like to thank you all once again for the incredibly spirited debate today.