



Upcoming Events

Event Name	Event Summary	Event Details
AIC Café	Taste different flavors from around the world! To commemorate AIC's 35th Anniversary, the Asahikawa International Committee will host the AIC Café where guests will be able to enjoy light refreshments from abroad and a casual language and cultural exchange!	Date: 9/5 (Fri) Time: 15:30-19:30 Location: Front of Feeeal Asahikawa (Heiwa-Dori Shopping Street)
Pengyou Lounge	Come practice your Chinese with us! Meet the Chinese speakers that live in Asahikawa and enjoy a chill evening of language exchange!	Date: 9/9 (Tue) Time: 18:00-19:00 Location: Asahikawa International Center Feeeal 7F (1-jo-dori 8-chome)
Solnyshka Lounge	Connect with the Russian speakers of Asahikawa! Practice your Russian language skills while meeting a community of Russian speakers in the city!	Date: 9/10 (Wed) Time: 18:00-19:00 Location: Asahikawa International Center Feeeal 7F (1-jo-dori 8-chome)
K x J Lounge	Come practice your Korean and Japanese language skills through this Korean-Japanese language exchange!	Date: 9/19 (Fri) Time: 18:00-19:00 Location: Asahikawa International Center Feeeal 7F (1-jo-dori 8-chome)
Nihongo Lounge	Studying Japanese? Join us for a fun and interactive language exchange with native Japanese volunteers from Asahikawa!	Date: 9/24 (Wed) Time: 18:00-19:00 Location: Asahikawa International Center Feeeal 7F (1-jo-dori 8-chome)



Check out our website and social media for information regarding the events above.

For further information or to register for events, contact:

Asahikawa International Committee (AIC), (NAGATA), (MIYAUCHI) or Coordinator for International Relations (CIR), (JOHN)

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****The opinions expressed in the essays are those of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the AIC or the City of Asahikawa.****

A Life Abroad: Finland

By Momoe Sagawa



If you have an opportunity to go abroad, how about you try to go to Finland?

Moi! Minä olen Momoe. Asun Asahikawassa, Hokkaidossa. Tykkään musiikkia ja voin soittaa pianoa ja viulua. Minä olin vaihto-opiskelija Suomessa. Joten, voin puhua vähän suomea!!

Hello! I am Momoe. I live in Asahikawa. I like music and I can play the piano and the violin. I was an exchange student in Finland. So, I can speak Finnish a little bit. (Translated from Finnish)

I studied abroad in Oulu, Finland 2 years ago. What is Finland famous for? You may imagine a sauna, Moomin and Northern Lights. Although, these are some of the Finland's charms, I will introduce other differences and surprising commonalities between Finland and Asahikawa. First, both Finnish and Asahikawa people ski in winter; however, for the Finnish, they tend to go cross-country skiing.

A lot of Finnish people have their own skis for cross-country skiing to enjoy skiing around their house or after work. After they go skiing, they usually drink cocoa (kaakao) and glögi (Finnish mulled wine), then go to their private sauna (almost all homes and apartments have a private sauna).

By the way, summers in Finland are quite cool. During summer vacation, Finnish people go to cottages in the forest with their families where they would go to relax, pick mushrooms and berries, and dive into cold rivers or lakes after going to the sauna. It is really bright in summer, so they relax outside of the cottage and watch the sunset from 21:00 to 22:00.

During the summer solstice (juhannus in Finnish), Finnish people like to pass the time by the fire and enjoy the longest daylight of the year before it gets darker and darker. Finnish people often go hiking, and after their hikes they would eat sausages. Sausages are so delicious that I could eat some after exercising a lot under the beautiful blue sky. While hiking, I could often see wild rabbits and reindeer thanks to Finland's magnificent nature.

In addition, I would like to introduce the lives of Finnish students. There are so many events at Finnish high school, and the best event for me was a prom called "wanhojen tanssit" we paired up and danced while wearing nice dresses. My school was a music school, so the school orchestra played the music!! Our lunch was served by the school so we do not have to bring except for when the employees strike.

As for textbooks, the school provided all of them on the computer. Of course we could get paper copies if we wanted. As for classes, we could select which classes with an advisor. There would be some free time between the class, so we would go shopping, eat lunch and practice the piano. This shows how free Finnish high school students are.

Falling Forward: Learning to Live and Work Abroad in Japan

By John Mabilangan



Hello! My name is John, and I'm Asahikawa's CIR (Coordinator of International Relations) under the JET Programme. As a CIR, I support the city's internationalization efforts through translation, interpretation, and cultural exchange. I'm now entering my third year on the program.

Living abroad is everything, everywhere, all at once. It's chaotic, thrilling, confusing, and deeply educational. Every moment is a learning opportunity. Studying a language in a classroom is like watching someone walk. Living abroad is learning to walk for yourself — you trip and fall, but eventually, you find your stride.

Take “yoroshiku onegaishimasu,” for example. It's a simple phrase used all the time in Japan, but wrapping my head around when and why to use it still takes conscious effort. Then there's the challenge of Wasei-Eigo — English-sounding words that don't mean what you expect — and being aware that gestures or direct translations don't always carry over culturally.

As a CIR working primarily in Japanese, I constantly ask my colleagues to repeat themselves or clarify what they've said. Public-facing work pushed me to strengthen my keigo and build the confidence to navigate formal conversations. Every conversation, every document, every meeting introduces new words, new expressions, and new ways to think.

Both my professional and personal life are filled with challenges, but equally filled with growth. From hesitating in meetings to confidently presenting in Japanese, from deciphering memos to writing reports, and from awkward first encounters to planning cultural events that spark real connections — every small win feels like a victory. The failures come, sure. But so does progress.

Living abroad doesn't get easier — but you do get better at it.

Help Us Complete the Japan National Census



Help Us Complete the Japan National Census

A national census will be put together using data collected as of October 1st. The national census is a legally mandated survey for residents of Japan, regardless of nationality.

Starting on September 20th, a census taker will visit each household to explain the purpose of the census and distribute census documents. If you are not home during their visit, the documents will be left in your mailbox or door mail slot.

Internet or paper responses must be submitted by October 8th. The census can be completed at any time online via smartphone or computer.

Please contact the National Census Asahikawa Office if you have trouble understanding the census, need translated copies, or have not received the census documents.

National Census Asahikawa Office

TEL: 25-9829

**Scan the QR Code to learn
about the national census!**

