



Kobe City University of Foreign Studies

神戸市外国語大学

# CITIZENS CHAT CAFE 2024

## FINAL REPORT



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## Greetings from Organizers

### Montserrat Sanz

I am very pleased to have hosted this activity that has connected Kobe City University of Foreign Studies with the Kobe citizenry in a very special way. We wanted to give back to the city by establishing a diverse discussion forum in English as a *lingua franca*, showing to everyone that we can communicate with each other in a language that is not native to many of us. We have discovered many friends who speak English to different degrees of competency and who have taught us many things about life and culture. Everyone has realized that mistakes or a foreign accent are not an obstacle for fruitful communication. The diversity of the participants increased at every event, and we could realize a true intercultural and intergenerational dialogue. Our undergraduate students have proven to be great facilitators, not only fluent in English but also capable of handling a group activity like this, engaging every participant through their role as moderators. Our foreign students have also been wonderful collaborators, bringing to the table their knowledge and experience of other countries. I am very proud of our students at Kobe Gaidai. In sum, it has mainly been a lot of fun and a very positive experience for everyone involved. We hope that this connection that we have started with the citizens of Kobe thrives for many years to come. I would like to thank Prof. Singh for inspiring the creation of this event, and Haruka Koike for having been a wonderful and a very hard-working manager. Thank you to everyone who has supported this first stage of the Citizens Chat Café.



### Rajeev Kumar Singh



We are pleased to present this report, reflecting the success and growth of our community-based event. The CCC has provided a valuable platform for local residents and students, both Japanese and international, to engage in meaningful conversations in English. It has been wonderful to see diverse groups come together, share ideas, and build connections across cultures.

We look forward to continuing to develop this initiative in the coming year, enhancing the experience for both participants and volunteers. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to making CCC a vibrant and enriching event, and I am excited for the opportunities ahead to strengthen our community ties.

## Haruka Koike



We would like to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who has participated in the CCC. We are extremely pleased to have had the opportunity to learn and grow together through this project. Each month, we saw diverse individuals with various backgrounds coming together to engage in meaningful conversations in English. This not only helped improve participants' language skills but also fostered the development of strong community relationships. We truly hope that this project will

continue to thrive and develop in the future.

## What is CCC?

CCC stands for Citizens Chat Cafe, which is a monthly event held at Kobe City University of Foreign Studies (KCUFS). It provides a platform for local residents to communicate with Japanese and international students in English. The event is inspired by City Chat Cafe, a similar initiative that used to take place in Tsukuba City. This popular event was organized by the University of Tsukuba, the Tsukuba International Association, and the Tsukuba Science City Network.

## Why CCC was established?

The Citizens Chat Café (CCC) was established to address the need for a platform where local residents can communicate in English and engage in meaningful conversations with university students. Recognizing the importance of fostering communication between the local community and students, CCC was created as an initiative to bridge this gap.

One of the primary aims of CCC is to give back to the community, aligning with the mission of KCUFS as a city university. By offering this monthly event, KCUFS, with the support of its staff and students, provides a free platform on campus where local residents can meet and talk with both Japanese and international students in English. The event covers a wide range of topics, helping to foster cross-cultural exchange and language practice in an informal, supportive environment. Through this initiative, CCC seeks to contribute to the community by promoting international communication and understanding.

## Brief Event Description

The Kobe Citizens Chat Cafe was launched in 2024 as part of the Kobe City University of Foreign Studies' promotion project. This is an event which primarily brings together international students from the university and local citizens of Kobe, offering them the opportunity to enjoy conversations in English. Held once a month, participants engage in discussions on various topics for approximately two hours, interacting with people of different backgrounds, age groups, and English proficiency levels.

## Purpose

The purpose of the event is to strengthen the connection between the university, our Japanese and international students, and the local community, while fostering mutual cultural understanding. Additionally, it aims to provide local residents with an opportunity to engage in conversations with international students in English, offering them a chance to enhance their English skills and fostering meaningful cultural exchange.

## Date

The sessions were held once a month, on Saturdays. Dates are as follows.  
2024 9/28, 10/26, 11/16, 12/7, 2025 1/25.

## Location

September's session was held at the Miki Hall at KCUFS. Other sessions were held at the meeting room 4&5 in Gakusei Kaikan building at KCUFS.

## Time

All sessions were held at the same time, from 13:30 to 15:30.

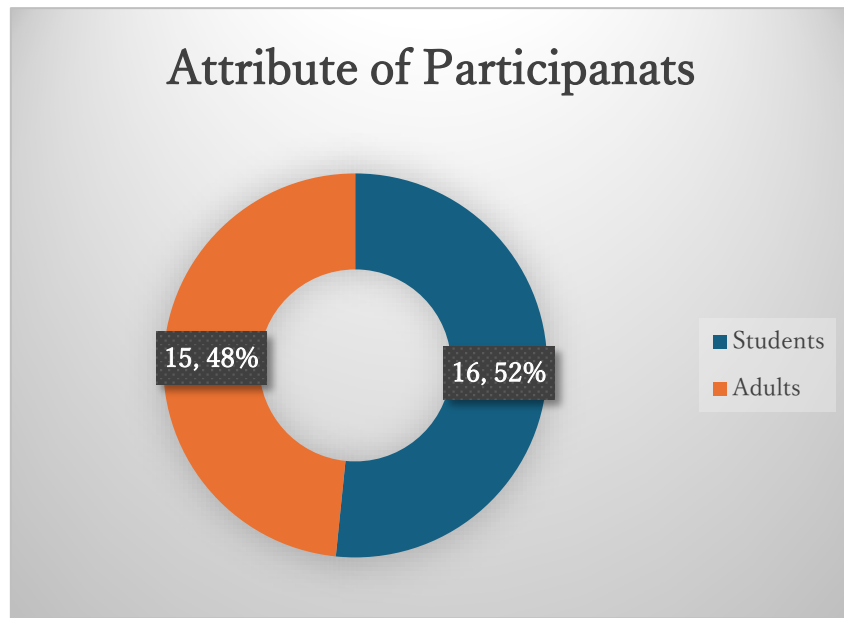
## Topics

<b>September</b>	<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>
<b>October</b>	Festival and events
<b>November</b>	Children's rights and wellbeing
<b>December</b>	Set by each moderator (e.g. hobby, travel experience)
<b>January</b>	How to spend winter vacation & New year's resolutions

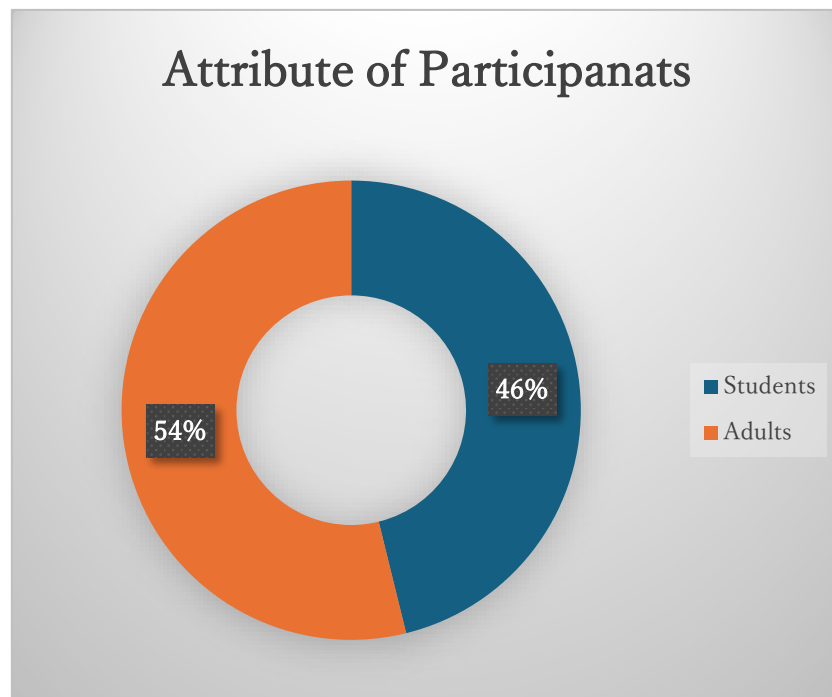
## Who attended?

**September:** 39 participants (no detailed data)

**October:** 31 participants

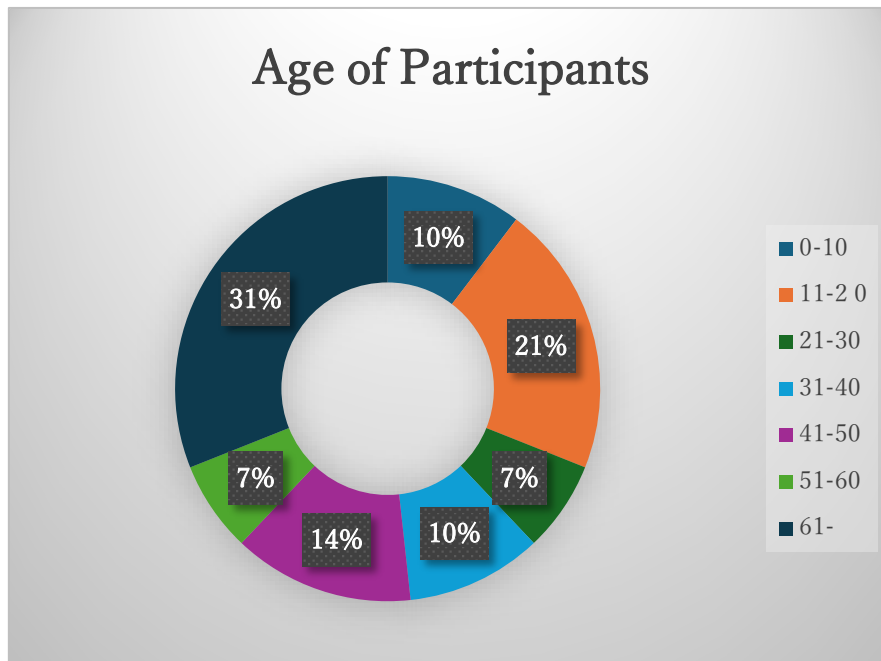


**November:** 26 participants

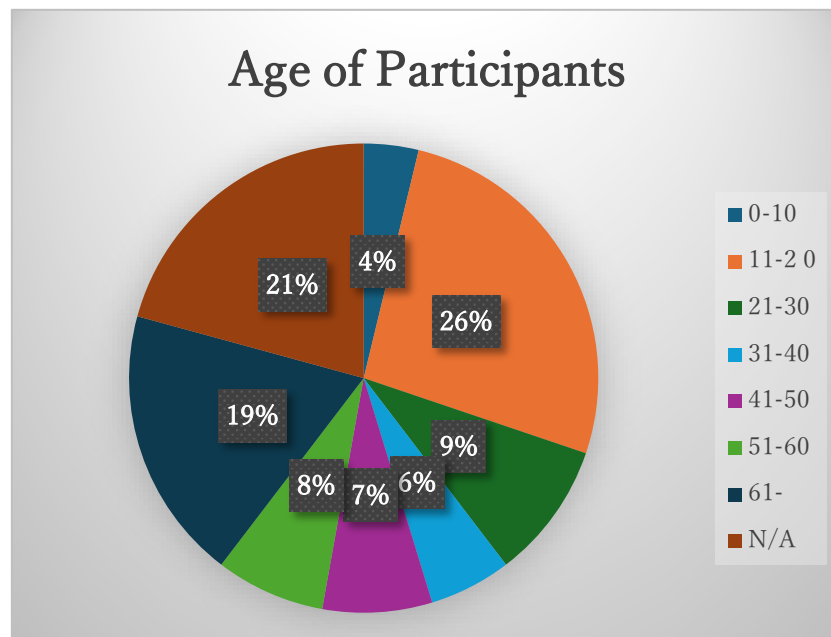




**December:** 43 participants



**January:** 53 participants

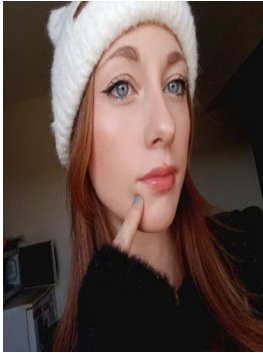


**Total:** 192 participants so far!



## Staff Comments

Lara Margherita (Participated in October, November, December)



I participated as a staff member in order to know more about the cultures, points of views, habits etc. of different people from my native country. It has been a really fulfilling experience and I had the opportunity not only to improve my English skills but also my social and talking skills. Even though there have been some organizational problems sometimes, I really had fun, and I want to thank all of the staff members and the professors that helped me.

Mahana Gonno (Participated in September, October, November, and December)



CCC was not only for the place where people can communicate in English, but also the opportunity to meet new friends through English. I'll never forget the shining smiles of participants who were gradually getting used to interacting with other participants and enjoy sharing their own experience and ideas by themselves!

Montserrat Sanz (Participated in January)



As a facilitator, I participated in January. I found it very important that older citizens, high school and junior HS students and middle-aged people were sitting together at the same table. They all participated actively and we all learned something new. Their English was quite good, overall. Some of them had lived abroad, others were from other provinces, and they all had different hobbies.

Claudine A Agillon (Participated in September, November, December, and January)



I am glad I got to participate to this project, because I wanted to make new experiences and connect with Japanese people. And so it was. I had the chance to talk to very amazing personalities, get to know about their stories and personal experiences. It was nice seeing so many people from different contexts and generations gather and seat on the same table sharing the same desire to practice English. It was also an opportunity to challenge myself and although it was not easy, I think I did quite a good job. Unfortunately, since I'll be back to my home country very soon and I won't be able to participate anymore but I hope Kobe CCC will continue to for many more sessions, welcoming more and more Kobe Citizens who wish to speak English.

Zoe (Participated in October, November, December)



My experience on the team has been great. It's been really rewarding to connect with and to help others with their English studies. I was extremely impressed by the level of English that some of the highschoolers spoke! Also, it made me really happy to share my interest in other cultures with the participants.

Hiyori Hara (Participated in September, October)



It was such an honor to be able to be in part of this event. There were many middle and high school students who participated in this, but surprisingly, I also saw many participants who were in their 40s or 50s. I thought that this event lets citizens from all ages practice their English and enjoy communicating with people from several backgrounds. I hope that this event will continue even after I graduate from this university and will be able to accept more and more participants in the near future.

#### Jingwen (Participated in September, October, and January)



Since there were a lot of various people came to the session, I could expand my point of view and learn several meaningful things. I was very nervous to be the host, but many people talked to me that they were enjoyed in the end of the session, which made me very happy! These were very valuable experiences and I am looking forward to join next year!

#### N.M (Participated in October and November)



I could meet many people of diverse ages from high school students to the elderly. We discussed various theme, and I gained new thoughts from their experiences. It was a unique and interesting experience. I hope that this event will grow even larger and become a place for many people to interact with each other.

#### Vincent (Participated in October, November, December)



I am truly grateful to have joined this event and had the opportunity to discuss various topics with people of different ages. It was a great experience to improve my English, exchange diverse perspectives, and learn something new. I am looking forward to joining again next year!

### Rajeev Kumar Singh (Participated in January)



As a first-time facilitator, I participated in the January CCC event, where the topic was "Winter Vacation and New Year's Resolutions." At my table, participants ranged from school students to retired individuals, including some elderly members. It was interesting to see the differences in discussions across ages. The students were keen on talking about video games, food, and travel, while the older participants shared their work and travel experiences, some even discussing their passion for cooking and community activities. What stood out to me was how everyone, despite the age gaps, engaged in meaningful conversations by asking questions in English. I was especially impressed by the high school students, who were initially shy but became more active and expressive as the discussion progressed. By the end, they had much to contribute, showing how CCC creates a space where people of all ages can comfortably share and learn from each other. Overall, CCC provides a wonderful platform for people to discuss various topics in English, fostering understanding and connection across generations.

### Amisa Nakata



The reason why I decided to be a Kobe CCC member was because I've always wanted to contribute Kobe as I was born and raised in this city. I expected there would be few people participating this event however, it turned out it was the other way around also, reasons why they decide to join the event were variety. This project allowed me to broaden my perspective through interacting people who have different background of their life. However, one thing I struggled as a facilitator was to ice break the atmosphere to start off the discussion especially when participants were nervous and sometimes overwhelmed to speak up because the discussion topic was not necessarily easy to everyone. In order to overcome this problem, I explained about the topic more relatable and understandable to them. This allowed participants to come up with the thoughts or opinions. This was not easy at first but I enjoyed the struggle because I could see participants also enjoyed discussing with their own English. I believe this project not only helped me grow as a facilitator, but also gave participants confidence with expressing themselves in English. Seeing them open up and active in discussion was rewarding to me.

Shun Ura (Participated in December)



It was a great experience to communicate with local people. The difficulty was that the range of participant's ages was various.



## CCC Posters



**LET'S TALK WITH  
GAIDAI STUDENTS!**

**WOULD YOU LIKE TO  
PRACTICE YOUR ENGLISH?**

**CITIZENS  
CHAT CAFE**

**THIS INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE EVENT LETS LOCAL RESIDENTS ENJOY  
CASUAL ENGLISH CONVERSATIONS WITH GAIDAI'S INTERNATIONAL AND  
JAPANESE STUDENTS.  
LET'S TALK FREELY IN ENGLISH!**

**Feel free to join and  
leave at any time.**

**Location: Meeting Room  
4&5, KCUFS Gakusei  
Kaikan**

**TIME: 13:30~15:30  
DATE: 2024 9/28, 10/26, 11/16,  
12/7, 2025 1/25**

**Everyone  
can join for  
free!**

**We have  
Japanese  
staff**

**FOR ANY INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT US EXCLUSIVELY AT THE FOLLOWING.  
EMAIL: [citizenschatcafe@gmail.com](mailto:citizenschatcafe@gmail.com)  
DO NOT CONTACT THE SCHOOL OFFICE DIRECTLY.**

**KOBE UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN STUDIES  
KCUPS PROMOTION PROJECT 2024**

**PLEASE REGISTER USING THIS QR CODE  
AT LEAST 2 DAYS BEFORE EACH SESSION**





**外大生と語ろう!**

英語でおはなししませんか

**CITIZENS CHAT CAFE**

日本人スタッフもいます

無料でどなたでも参加可

地域住民が外大の留学生や日本人学生と英語で気軽に楽しく会話できる国際交流イベントです。

途中参加・途中退室自由

学生会館 4・5会議室

開催時間 13:30~15:30  
開催日程 2024 9/28, 10/26, 11/16, 12/7  
2025 1/25

当イベントに関するお問い合わせは下記のメールのみにて承ります。  
直接大学へお問い合わせいただくことはできません。  
お問い合わせ先: [citizenschatcafe@gmail.com](mailto:citizenschatcafe@gmail.com)

神戸市公立大学法人 神戸市外国語大学  
神戸市外国語大学 魅力発信事業2024

参加希望の方は右QRコードから→  
各回の2日前までにお申し込みください。





## Media Exposure

The CCC was published on October 23, 2024, issue of "Viva New Town" and its website. It is distributed to a total of 105,550 households in the Suma, Nishi, and Tarumi wards of Kobe City. It primarily provides news, event information, and lifestyle-related content concerning residential areas and local communities within Kobe City.

**Online Article:** <https://www.vivanewtown.com/archives/7171>

## Photos along with a Group Photo



The first group photo, a memorable moment



The room is filled with energy, with participants from a wide range of age groups



Sharing moments of laughter



Gestures are universal



Becoming familiar with English through games



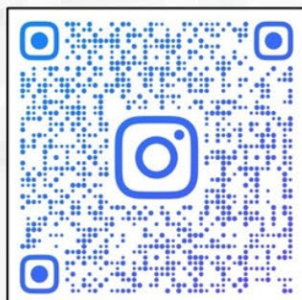
Learning new words

# **CITIZENS CHAT CAFE 2024**

## **FINAL REPORT**

### **LINE & INSTAGRAM**

AN OFFICIAL LINE ACCOUNT HAS BEEN SET UP FOR COMMUNICATION WITH PARTICIPANTS, INCLUDING PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENTS, REPORTS, AND CANCELLATION REQUESTS



Link for Instagram account:  
[https://www.instagram.com/citizens\\_chat\\_cafe/](https://www.instagram.com/citizens_chat_cafe/)