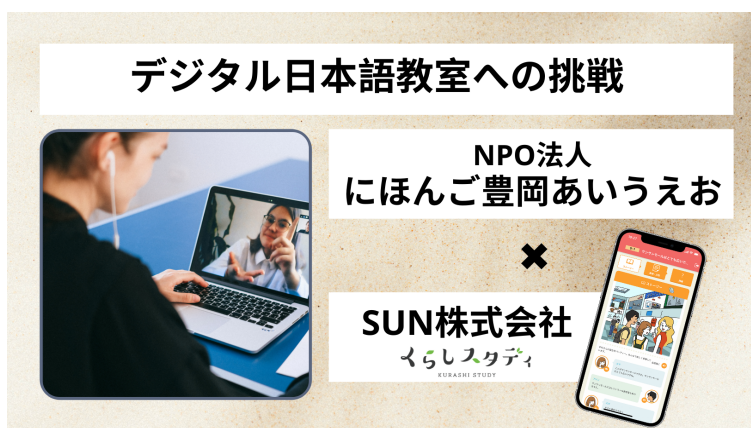


Support for Toyooka NPO's Challenge in Digital Japanese Language Education Online Japanese language classes for foreign residents in Japan

On Tuesday, February 22, SUN Co., Ltd. (Headoffice: Minato-ku, Tokyo, President and CEO: Shumpei Nakasone), held an online Japanese language class utilizing digital teaching materials with "Nihongo Toyooka Aiueo," a non-profit organization that provides daily life support to foreign residents in the community in Toyooka City, Hyogo Prefecture.



■ Story

"KURASHI STUDY" operated by SUN is a story-based Japanese language learning app based on the theme of Japanese life. This app can be used not only for independent study, but also as a teaching material for online Japanese language classes. Since ICT and digitalization of Japanese language education enables stable class operation without being affected by external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, SUN is enhancing the digitalization of Japanese language education by using this app.

In the course of such activities, we became interested in Toyooka City through a presentation on attracting IT companies, and Toyooka City referred us to a non-profit organization, "Nihongo Toyooka Aiueo", which supports the lives of foreigners and children with foreign roots living in the community. One of the support activities is a "Japanese language class" where Japanese spouses, ALTs (assistant language teachers), CIRs (coordinators for international relations), children with foreign roots, and technical intern trainees learn Japanese. Since the classes were based on face-to-face operations, it was sometimes difficult to hold classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic and weather conditions. Now that they are actively considering the digitalization of Japanese language classes, they showed interest in SUN's efforts, which led them to experience an online Japanese language class utilizing the "KURASHI STUDY" Japanese language learning app.



(Group photo after class)

■ Comments from NPO Nihongo Toyooka Aiueo

Having operated on a face-to-face basis, there was a period of time immediately after the state of emergency was declared in 2020 when we stopped all activities, not only Japanese language classes. In particular, the use of online tools to check on the safety of children from foreign families and to continue to support them in maintaining their Japanese language skills led us to consider going digital.

There are more than 800 foreigners living in Toyooka, and not all of them have sufficient opportunities to learn. In addition to the "covid-19 pandemic," the Toyooka area also experiences a lot of snow in the winter, making it sometimes impossible for learners and supporters to attend classes. We have felt the effectiveness of online utilization to provide stable support, and have decided to try the online classes offered by SUN Corporation, which was referred to us by the city of Toyooka.

Through this experience, We felt the potential for digitalization of Japanese language education. In particular, I think it could be used as content for learners' home study. With an app, students can study at any time they want and can prepare and review over and over again. Since the app is still developing, we would like to keep an eye on future developments.

■ Comments from SUN corporation

President & CEO: Shumpei Nakasone

When I first visited "Nihongo Toyooka Aiueo," everyone's smiling faces were very impressive. In some local Japanese language classes, there is a distance between Japanese and foreigners, which creates a school-like tension. At "Nihongo Toyooka Aieo," however, foreigners living in the community were using the class casually, looking forward not only to learning Japanese but also to interacting with the supporters. I thought it was a wonderful environment for them living in a foreign country.

In Japan, which is actively accepting foreign workers, many local governments are facing the issues of "multicultural coexistence and local international exchange" and "local Japanese language classes". Although these issues are sometimes considered in isolation, through this initiative, we were reminded that revitalizing "local Japanese language classes" will also lead to "multicultural coexistence and local international exchange". By utilizing our Japanese language learning app, local Japanese language classes can be digitized and operated online. We hope that our efforts will provide an opportunity to increase opportunities for exchange with foreigners living in the community.

■ About the event

Description: Online Japanese class using the app "KURASHI STUDY"

Date: Tuesday, February 22, 2022, 19:00-20:00

Place: Held online

■ Japanese language app "KURASHI STUDY"

<https://kurashi-study.net>

KURASHI STUDY is a story-based Japanese learning app that teaches Japanese grammar, expressions, vocabulary, and pronunciation through conversation. With a total of 96 scenes based on Japanese life, you can also learn the rules of life and administrative rules necessary for living in Japan. All conversations are audio-recorded, so you can improve your Japanese "reading, listening, and speaking" skills just by using the app, without going to school. The app also has an "Online Japanese Conversation (Talk)*" service that allows you to take private lessons with a professional Japanese language teacher. You can freely ask for help with things you don't understand in your independent study, or with any problems you may have in your life in Japan. It also conforms to the scope and format of the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT), and is recommended for those aiming to acquire N5 to N2 levels.

* Online Japanese conversation(Talk) service is a paid option.



■ Related releases

First collaboration with Kyoto City International Foundation Online classes using Japanese language education app https://www.sun21.co.jp/news/2021/online_japanese_classes.php

■ NPO “Nihongo Toyooka Aiueo”

<http://www.eonet.ne.jp/~aiueo-nihongo/index.html>

We are a non-profit organization in Toyooka City, Hyogo Prefecture, that supports people with foreign roots to settle into local life as residents of the community. It operates local Japanese language classes, supports Japanese language learning for children with foreign roots, organizes events where foreigners and Japanese living in the community can interact, trains volunteers for Japanese language study and multicultural activities, and provides consultation on daily life for foreigners living in the community. As residents of the same community, we aim to create a city where people can help each other regardless of nationality.

Introduced on サンテレビ(Japanese TV show) on Sunday, January 23, 2022.

サンテレビ「ひょうご発信！」「今週の輝きさん」

サンテレビ Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUfAzNu7TAM>

(Japanese)

■ SUN Co., Ltd.

<https://www.sun21.co.jp/>

We are an IT company that operates a system integration business, web design and a foreign resident support business under the corporate philosophy "To become a globally-renowned company based on our mission 'connect people with people' ". We will actively hire globally, and by connecting people, create new value and deliver innovation to the world.