

Welcome to Our Home



Building a Community in Sumiyoshi

Community development in Sumiyoshi can be divided into 5 stages.

First stage: Pre World War II (Sumiyoshi community building promoted by an initiative of municipal and local governments: The Improvement Project for Rebuilding Buraku Communities)

In 1918, 12 community members of the Sumiyoshi Buraku who had joined the Rice riot were falsely arrested and convicted as ring leaders.

In 1922, a government initiative, called The Improvement Project for Rebuilding Buraku Communities, was undertaken at 20 Buraku communities nationwide for oppressing Movement from Zenkoku Suiheishya (National Levelers Association which is Buraku min's organization). In Osaka, the improvement project was adopted only for the Sumiyoshi Community. This project continued for the 11 years following 1922. Over that time, thirty-three wooden one-story houses were built, new roads were established, old roads were widened, and a new park was built. Day care centers for youth and children were established. However, the outbreak of WWII led to the project being abandoned only 60% complete in Sumiyoshi.

It can be said that this is the first stage of community development in Sumiyoshi Buraku Community. It was conducted on the initiative of municipal and city governments, with little opportunity for residents to participate. Therefore, improvement of the infrastructure in Sumiyoshi Buraku was limited.

Second Stage: From Participation in the Osaka City Committee to Promote Dowa Projects to the establishment of the Law for Special Measures for Dowa Projects

In 1953(Showa 28), community residents discussed repair work for the community bath ("Seinen U"). Sumiyoshi Buraku worked with the Osaka City Committee to Promote Dowa Projects. Six community leaders established the Sumiyoshi Branch of the Buraku Liberation League. This reformation of Sumiyoshi Buraku had a positive effect on community development, and this was the dawn of second stage of community development.

In 1959 (Showa 34) a Municipal Housing Unit was built at the most harsh place in the Sumiyoshi Buraku community, an area called "Kitaki," and the following year Sumiyoshi Settlement House was founded as a center to house various projects for the Sumiyoshi Buraku. In 1961 (Showa 36) Sumiyoshi Settlement House Foundation was established to manage the settlement house. The foundation adopted a distinctive self-management

method. Typically at that time, when the municipal government built settlement facility, employed the staff, and managed projects and budget for those projects. However, in the Sumiyoshi case, the municipal government built the settlement facility, employed the staff, and supported the finances, but the projects and the staff were managed by a board of community members. This board was called the Sumiyoshi Settlement House Foundation.

This idea originally came from the first president of the Sumiyoshi Settlement House Foundation, the late Toshio Sumida, who argued that “it is better to select a person who is familiar with local condition, and to conduct a project suitable for the community”. This self-management produced good results that enabled board members and staff in the foundation to meet with local residents and support their self-reliance. As a result, local residents formed several types of unions to demand their needs to the municipal government. Over time, this led to the improvement of infrastructure such as establishment of house units and children care center, allowing many local residents to go to high school and some of them to become public servants, though mainly in ‘3D’ (dirty, dangerous, difficult) jobs.

The Second Stage of community development in Sumiyoshi was thus characterized by resident participation and an improvement of living environment and educational and employment matters.

Third Stage: From the establishment of the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects until its abolishment

In 1969, the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects was passed and national and municipal governments produced concrete measures to solve Buraku problems, such as improving infrastructure in Buraku communities. There were three primary features of the third stage of community development. First, local people participated in the plan for building community. In 1970, a sub-commission in Sumiyoshi Buraku community was charged with developing a general plan for community development, and this sub-commission had many workshops with local residents. In 1972, local people investigated and clarified the actual conditions of the community. This investigation raised local peoples’ awareness of and desire to eliminate Buraku discrimination and empowered them to promote community development on their own. Second, this stage also featured the involvement of specialists. Experts such as University professors and architects were attracted by the Sumiyoshi autonomous community development and embodied the picture of the concrete idea of the local residents to develop community into the Master plan. The third feature was the adoption of the Six Principles of Community Development (see table 1).

In 1973 April, Sumiyoshi established a committee to plan for the next decade of community development. This committee drafted the six principles as the foundation of their development vision. As a result of the actions of this committee, numerous public facilities – such as the Human Rights and Cultural Center, Youth Care Center, Welfare Center, and Childcare center – were established in the center of the community, and 20 municipal housing units were built around these facilities. The community was dramatically reformed to support its residents. In the same time period, Sumiyoshi Buraku community members also worked to improve the employment situation of residents, and many local residents were employed as licensed cooks, home-care workers, childcare workers, and teachers.

Table 1 – Six Principles of Community Development

1. **To build a community where residents can reside permanently**
2. **To build a community for all residents**
3. **To build a community that values human relationships**
4. **To build a community that protects residents' health**
5. **To build a community where children, the elderly, and those with disabilities can live with equal dignity and in health**
6. **To build a community that also support residents from neighbouring communities**

Fourth Stage: The abolishment of the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects until the establishment of the preparatory meeting for the new committee of community development

In March of 2002, the Law on Special Measures for Dowa Projects was abolished. However, discrimination against Buraku people continues: internet slander is on the rise, property values are still low, there is interpersonal discrimination between newcomers and long term residents, and the high school and college graduation rates in Sumiyoshi are markedly below the national average. Moreover, due to the municipal economic crisis, the local government has been slashing funds that support Buraku projects. In Osaka City, the municipal government has consolidated its various public facilities into one, and closed the remainder. In Sumiyoshi's case, the Human Rights Center (renamed in 2010 to The Center for Civic Society in North Sumiyoshi) was integrated into the larger city facilities and the youth center was closed. The Sumiyoshi Settlement House Foundation was in charge of managing the center under the appointed body system in Osaka city government.

Sumiyoshi residents are attempting to make the best of these decreased resources. They are not only utilizing policies and measures from the national and municipal governments, but also cooperating with private sector organizations (enterprise, NGOs and NPOs), neighbors, and specialists. For example, while the Youth Center gymnasium was slated to be closed, residents from Sumiyoshi and surrounding neighborhoods circulated a petition to

demand the reopening of the gym under the cooperative management of the various residents. They presented this petition to members of the Osaka educational committee and members of the municipal assembly. In response, the gymnasium was reopened under cooperative management. Another example is the 1999 establishment of a social welfare collective and the opening of a new facility called Nagomi (Vision) that houses projects for people with disabilities and the elderly from Sumiyoshi and neighboring communities.

Fifth stage: Toward new community development

Presently, community development in Sumiyoshi continues to struggle under ever decreasing government support. Young people are again facing very unstable work conditions and have limited chances for higher education or to secure employment. Residential profiling of Sumiyoshi residents also continues to occur. These worsening circumstances underscore the need for a strategy to bolster community development. In 2011 the Sumiyoshi Settlement House Foundation applied for status as a public interest incorporated foundation within Osaka prefecture. This status was granted in 2012.

In 2011, the foundation celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Sumiyoshi Settlement House Foundation and the 100th birthday of the late Mr. Toshio Sumida. As part of this celebration, they highlighted historical accomplishments and their relevance for the current situation in Sumiyoshi. Following this celebration, the foundation organized the first preparatory meeting for a new committee for community development bringing together all of the main organizations in the wider Sumiyoshi ward.

Learning from past success, the Sumiyoshi Buraku community continues to value resident and specialist participation, conducts surveys of the actual living conditions of the community, and affirms the principles of community development. As we move forward, we envision community development as a critical tool in dismantling discrimination against Buraku people and securing respect for all. Our primary goals moving forward are: 1. Building a community that provides a secure and supportive environment for children, the elderly, and those with disabilities; 2. Building a community that empowers people to continue in school and that provides greater employment stability; 3. Building a community that provides not just for residents of Sumiyoshi but of surrounding communities as well; and 4. Building a community in which all of these people are empowered to participate in community activities.

On this path, Sumiyoshi community residents are simultaneously working with national and municipal governments and also with private sector organizations, their neighbors, and specialists.

History of Sumiyoshi

Date	Event
First stage of Community Development in the Sumiyoshi Buraku (Period of Improvement Policy for Rebuilding Sumiyoshi Community)	
1919	Construction of Seinen yu (Community Bath)
1923	Period of Improvement Policy for Rebuilding Sumiyoshi Community commenced and finished in 1933
1934	Construction of Youth Center
1938	Construction of child day-care center
Second Stage: until enactment of the law on special measures for Dowa projects	
1953	Sumiyoshi Buraku joined Osaka City Committee of promotion for Dowa project
1954	Reconstruction of Seinen Yu (Community Bath)
1955	Construction of employment center
1956	Establishment of the Sumiyoshi Branch of the Buraku Liberation League
1959	Construction of first two municipal housing units in Sumiyoshi
1960	Completion of Sumiyoshi Settlement House
1961	Formation of Sumiyoshi Settlement House Foundation
1962	Construction of New Community Bath (Kotobuki Yu) Construction of third municipal housing unit
1964	Construction of Shiktsu number number 1 Municipal Housing Unit in Sumiyoshi
1965	Establishment of 3rd floor of Sumiyoshi Settlement House The Dowa Policy Council Report published
1967	Construction of fourth municipal housing unit in Sumiyoshi Completion of Nursery school
1968	Construction of first three municipal housing units in Misaki
Third Stage: until abolishment of the law on special measures for Dowa projects	
1969	Enactment of the law on special measures for Dowa projects

1970	Construction of fourth and fifth municipal housing units in Misaki Construction of Misaki Nursery school
1973	Establishment of the sub-commission for a decade of community development Construction of Day Care Center for Elderly People
1975	Construction of the sixth and seventh municipal housing units in Sumiyoshi
1976	Construction of temporary Co-op next to the Sumiyoshi Higashi railway station Renovation of Kotobuki yu (Community Bath) Construction of temporary day care center for handicapped people
1977	Construction of new building for the Sumiyoshi Buraku Liberation Center Construction of an annex gymnasium for Youth Center
1978	Construction of Youth Center Construction of Nursery School for infants Construction of Municipal Housing Units number10 and 15
1979	Construction of first two municipal housing units in Uezumiyoshi Construction of Municipal Housing Unit number14 in Sumiyoshi
1980	Construction of Nursery School for Toddlers
1981	Construction of municipal housing units number9, 11, 16 in Sumiyoshi
1982	Construction of municipal housing unit number 2 in Uezumiyoshi Completion of a full co-op next to the Sumiyoshi Higashi railway station
1983	Construction of municipal housing unit number13 in Sumiyoshi
1984	Construction of municipal housing unit number 8 in Sumiyoshi
1986	Sumiyoshi General Welfare Center Sumiyoshi Medicare Center
1987	Construction of municipal housing unit number12 in Sumiyoshi

1988	Completion of Kaminoki Underground passage
1994	Construction of municipal housing unit number 17 in Sumiyoshi
1996	Open of Rapor Sumiyoshi next to the Sumiyoshi Higashi Station
1999	Establishment of a social welfare cooperative, Life Support Committee
2000	Sumiyoshi Buraku Liberation Center changes name to Sumiyoshi Human Rights and Culture Center
2001	Establishment of 100 yen shop Rapor Sumiyoshi next to Sumiyoshi Higashi Station

Fourth Stage: after abolishment of the law on special measures for Dowa projects

2002	Sumiyoshi, Osaka City Committee of Promotion for Dowa Projects changes name to Sumiyoshi Human Rights Committee
2003	Reconstruction of Sumiyoshi General Welfare Center
2004	Establishment of regional self support promotion center NAGOMI
2006	Closed Youth Center
2007	Establishment of Multifunctional Long-Term Care in a Small Group Home, Kizuna
2008	Completion of construction of New number 1 Municipal Housing Unit
2010	Closed Youth Center gymnasium annex Sumiyoshi Human Rights and Culture Center changes name to

Fifth stage: Toward the new community building

2011	Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Sumiyoshi Settlement House Foundation and the 100th Birthday of the late Mr. Toshio Sumida First preparatory meeting for the committee of the new Sumiyoshi community development
2012	Sumiyoshi Settlement House Foundation changes name to Sumiyoshi Settlement House Promotion Association

Personal memory before the Community Development in Sumiyoshi

Communal water tap

water for coking, washing was drawn from communal water tap or well into the tin can. We often used the water for drinking but looking back, the water must have been too dirty to drink.

Woman (born in 1946)

We also have a good memory of the communal water tap. When we washed, we talked about day-to-day things such as which neighbors were starving so we could understand each others situations and share the difficulties.

Women (born in 1932)



Communal Toilet

I was born and lived in the most poorest part of this community (the far north part) . Around 20 households used one communal toilet and in the morning there was long line. In the winter, It was too cold to go out to the toilet so some households used a wooden keg as an alternative toilet

In the wet season, sewage overflowed from the toilet and it smelled horrible. Under these terrible sanitary conditions, people suffered eye and stomach infections. Some people even died.

Woman (born in 1946)



Construction of gas and water lines

I was very happy when the new municipal housing units were built. Especially I was surprised by running water and gas. It seemed to me like I had moved from hell to heaven.

Before the construction of gas pipes, We often went to the river to pick up firewood. Because we were very poor, we couldn't afford to buy firewood from the shop. Some of the residents didn't know how to use gas so they didn't use it until they were later instructed.

Woman (born in 1946)



Until 1973, there were around 550 house holds in Sumiyoshi Buraku and 60 shops such as a foot-wear shop, barbershop, mom-and-pop candy shops, rice shop and a variety of places to get food. Most common among them were Okonomi yaki (savory pancake), Udon noodle, and Oden (stewed ingredients).

According to interviews with elderly people, there were 7 Okonomi yaki shops () and Udon noodle shops () respectively.

These food shops didn't have any noticeable sign so we had to find them by listening for them at night or by smell.

I think that these shops both brought some money to their owners and a sense of mutual aid amidst the tough conditions in which we lived.

man(born in 1951)



New Sumiyoshi Community

Old



Old houses become reinforced rod houses

Present



living environment full of greenery



Passageways providing security for local residents



Construction of water and gas pipe lines



1  In Feb 1977, the Annex Gym for the Youth Center was established. The concept of the Gym was "Healthy and Sporty life for people in the community". The Gym has been used not only for the youth sport festival but by many neighbors.

The gym was closed in Mar 2010, but local residents and neighbors took action to reopen it under cooperative management.

2  In Apr 1978, the Youth Center was established for the Buraku Liberation Children Association and their protector groups. In Apr 1999, due to the revision of the municipal ordinance the center took on the various types of projects for the citizen. In 2010, due to the integration policy to integrate three facilities, that is, the human rights and culture center, youth center and welfare center into one, the youth center was closed.

3  In Jun 1960, the Sumiyoshi Rimpokan was established at the place NAGOMI now exists. From the beginning, the Rimpokan was managed by a distinct method, in which government provides support for the facility and employee salary, and the community manages it. The center conducted many projects to improve daily life and culture and eliminate Buraku discrimination. In 1970, with the revision of a municipal ordinance, the name was changed to "Sumiyoshi Liberation Center". In Feb 1977, the building was moved to its current location. In Apr 2000, another revision of the ordinance changed the name to "Human Rights and Cultural Center". Since Apr 2002, the appointed body system allowed Osaka City Human Rights Association management and in Apr 2010, due to the integration policy, the name was again changed to "the Center for the Civic Society" and the appointed body system appointed Sumiyoshi Rimpokan Foundation to manage. In 2012 Apr, the Foundation became the public foundation.

4  In Apr 1978, a nursery school for Infants was established. The Sumiyoshi Committee for building a Nursery School inspected many Nursery Schools in other prefectures and the school has an infant safe "Worm Floor" and accepts infants from birth to two years old. In 2003, Child Care Center was established as the annex with the school.

5  In Feb 1919, Temple Gardeners and Bukkyo Youth Circle built a communal bath, "Seinen Yu". In 1954, the community joined the Osaka City Committee to promote Dowa projects and the committee gave the financial support to renovate the bath. In Apr 1962, the bath was rebuilt and the name was changed to "Kotobuki Yu". The bath has been managed by local residents since Dec 2010.

6  In 1986, the Sumiyoshi General Welfare Center was established to compliment city run facilities such as the "Elderly Welfare Center" and "Meeting place for Hand capped people". In 2006 and 2012 both ordinance facilities were abolished due to the abolished of the ordinances but the Life Support Social Welfare Cooperation managed projects for elderly and handicapped people and Hart Free Yasuragi Medical Cooperation managed Sumiyoshi Medicare center.

7  In Apr 1980, the Nursery School for Toddlers ages 3-5 was established. The school has accepted local and neighboring toddlers and has promoted Human Rights Nursery Education for them since 1999.

Since 2004, the school has maintained a special project for children recovering from illness and the project has been used by toddlers in the neighboring nursery schools.

8  The Regional self-support promotion center NAGOMI was founded as a 24 hour regional care center for elderly people from the local and neighboring communities to live safely in 2004. The center has a Special elderly nursing home and Day Care Service and in 2010, a General Support Service at the north part of the Sumiyoshi was established. In addition, Meals on Wheels and 100 yen café were established. The center is located where Sumiyoshi Rimpokan was established. The Life Support Social Welfare Cooperation managed the center.

