

J.CLAIR Singapore Newsletter

vol.69 February

Knowledge-Exchange Forum for Local Government Officials held in the Philippines

A Knowledge-Exchange Forum titled “Local Government Collaboration Towards a Resilient and Sustainable Local Economy” was held in Manila, the Philippines, on 26 July. Targeted for local government officials in the Philippines, this forum was co-organized by J.CLAIR Singapore and Japan’s Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), together with the Local Government Academy (LGA), a training arm for local governments in the Philippines that is under the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Inviting 3 speakers each from various local governments in both the Philippines and Japan, the program was divided into the following 5 themes: Investment Promotion, Disaster Resilience, Disaster Management, Green Economy and International Cooperation and Agricultural Technology. During the first-half of the session, speakers including the Governor of Bohol Province as well as representatives from Ilo Ilo Province, Benguet Province, Fukuoka Prefecture, Saitama Prefecture and Kochi Prefecture all took to the stage to give a presentation on some of the best practices at their respective local governments, in relation to the 5 themes above.

Following that, to allow all speakers and participants an opportunity to further exchange their views and experiences on the different themes in a more comfortable and close setting, a new component termed the “Knowledge Café” was also incorporated into the program. In this session, each speaker was tasked to oversee a “café”

that was under one of the 5 seminar themes, and all participants are given the opportunity to visit and rotate around these “cafés” to learn and share more insights about these topics with both the speakers and other participants. As expected, all participants were very keen and eager to share about the various challenges and issues faced by their own local governments, as everyone gathered in their groups together with the speakers to have a lively exchange and discussion on the topics.

With the warm participation from all our speakers and participants, the program ended on a highly successful note and can be said to have helped contribute in further leveraging the collaboration between local governments in both the Philippines and Japan to greater heights.



Speakers and participants exchanging their views during the Knowledge Café session



A Message from Executive Director Marivel C. Sacendoncillo Local Government Academy

Japan and the Philippines share many things. Unfortunately, experiences of devastating natural disasters are some of them.

In recent years, both our countries have seen destruction at unprecedented scales. Based on scientific predictions, we will have more frequent and intense disasters, and our local government units will continue to be at the forefront. Given this history and the possibility of worse catastrophes, we must continue to equip our communities and learn as much as we can from our neighbors' works.

During the Knowledge Exchange Forum, I witnessed two things.

First, despite the effects disasters had on our countries' local government units, the ingenuity and grit of leaders and residents have allowed us to build even stronger communities. By turning to technology and more efficient organizational systems, places

like Bohol and Saitama were able to recover and achieve greater sustainability despite catastrophic earthquakes.

Today, Bohol has managed to reduce their poverty incidence despite the earthquake and continues to improve emergency response system TaRSIER 117. Saitama, on the other hand, transformed itself into an energy efficient and eco-friendly town.

Second, maximizing the partnership between our two countries through learning opportunities widens our perspective and offers glimpses of new solutions and the frontiers that come with them. Aser Berting, an agriculturist from Benguet, visited the Kochi prefecture to learn better food production techniques, which he brought home with him and now implements in the province.

We know that information is now one of the most powerful tools at our disposal, and by continuing to hold seminars such as this, the Local Government Academy and CLAIR can help create communities in the Philippines and Japan that can withstand disasters and come back even stronger.

Opening of the SJ50 JET Exchange Matsuri

J.CLAIR Singapore, together with the Embassy of Japan in Singapore co-hosted the "SJ50 JET Exchange Matsuri" at the Japanese Association on 19 September.

Singapore and Japan are celebrating our 50 years of diplomatic relations this year, and it also marks the 30th Anniversary of the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme, one of the world's largest exchange programmes that dispatches foreign youths to Japan as foreign language teachers and coordinators for international relations etc.

To commemorate the occasion and take the opportunity in looking back at some of the achievements of the JET Programme, the scale of the welcome-back party that is held annually for all newly-returned JET participants was expanded this year into the "SJ50 JET Exchange Matsuri". With an aim to further develop and bring the JET Programme forward to the future, a total of 110 guests were invited to join us at the event, including 21 former JET participants as well as many of our local and Japanese counterparts, in addition to representatives from Japanese companies operating in Singapore. All of the guests made the most of their time at the event to interact and deepen their exchanges with one another,

and the event concluded successfully with a group photo of everyone cheering, "SJ50 Omedetou! (Congratulations SJ50!)"

Since 1994, Singapore has sent a total of 304 participants for the JET Programme to date. Even upon their return, many of our JET participants continue to be very involved and active in supporting the building of strong ties between Singapore and Japan through activities organized by the JET Alumni Association (JETAA) Singapore. Symbolic of the friendship and closed relations between Singapore and Japan, J.CLAIR Singapore looks forward to continue supporting the activities of JETAA Singapore and to further promote the JET Programme.



Guests cheering "SJ50 Omedetou!" at the SJ50 JET Exchange Matsuri

Indonesia-Japan Local Administration Seminar 2016

"Indonesia-Japan Local Administration Seminar 2016", an international seminar on local governance jointly organized by Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) and Indonesia's National Institute of Public Administration (NIPA), was successfully implemented in Indonesia's Jakarta on 25 and 26 August 2016. J.CLAIR Singapore provided coordination support for the implementation of the seminar, in particular with regards to the liaison between Indonesia and Japan.

This is the second consecutive year that the seminar is being held in Indonesia, and the theme for this year's seminar focused on village capacity development, which is seen as the pillar of strengthening local administration in the ASEAN region. Speakers from Japan included Mr. Takeshi Miyaji, Deputy Director-General of Policy Coordination under the Minister's Secretariat of MIC, as well as Mr. Noritoshi Kondo, Assistant Director of Finance Division under the Shinkamigoto Town Hall, and Ms. Junko Hirose, Associate Director of the Commerce and Industry Policies Division of Shiga Prefectural Government. The 3 speakers from Japan deliberated on topics such as the formation process of local authorities in Japan, financial systems as well as initiatives implemented by Japanese local governments in promoting their local specialty products.

On the other hand, speakers from Indonesia included Mr. Bambang Ismawan, Director of TRUBUS Indonesia as well as

Mr. Suyoto, Regent of East Java's Bojonegoro Regency. The 2 speakers from Indonesia discussed about the innovations in developing village-owned enterprises, in addition to strategies in empowering and transforming the public service. The concluding Panel Discussion Session saw speakers and participants from both Japan and Indonesia engaged in lively discussions pertaining to the various issues of village capacity building.



A scene from the Panel Discussion Session

Geishas from Hakata, Japan Perform in Singapore

On 1 October 2016, The Japanese Cultural Society (JCS) Singapore organized their annual "Japanese Cultural Festival" which aims to acquaint Singaporeans with the various forms of Japanese culture. This is the 46th consecutive year that the Festival has been organized and in conjunction with the celebration of 50 years of diplomatic relations between Singapore and Japan (SJ50), the Festival was selected to be one of the special commemorative events of SJ50.

Seizing this opportunity to introduce Singaporeans to the traditional art of song and dance as performed by a Japanese geisha, J.CLAIR Singapore and JCS collaborated to invite 4 geishas of the *Hakata Kenban* to give a performance at the Festival. A *kenban* is an agency that manages geishas' schedules and performance fees, and it is also where the geishas practice their songs and dances.

During the Festival, there were various performances such as Japanese harp and drums, classical dance and popular songs presented by both Japanese and Singaporean interest groups. The geishas did their 4 dance items just before the grand finale, mesmerizing the audience with the grace and beauty of their art. Some people in the audience were even moved to tears by their performance.

There were about 700 people in the audience that day and most of them were Singaporeans. All the feedback gathered on the geishas' performance consist of emotional praise such as "Beautiful!" or "Wonderful first experience!" An authentic geisha performance is a rare experience even for the Japanese, thus we hope that this will become a motivation for Singaporeans to discover more about Japanese traditional arts.



Geishas of the *Hakata Kenban* performing the dance item *Nage-bushi*

Regional Exchange Promotion Program 2016 in Singapore and Malaysia

J.CLAIR Singapore has successfully implemented the Regional Exchange Promotion Program in Singapore and Malaysia from 28 September to 8 October 2016, in collaboration with the Japan Intercultural Academy of Municipalities (JIAM) as well as other related organizations.

Conducted since 2007, the Regional Exchange Promotion Program provides an opportunity for Japanese local government officials to visit countries in the ASEAN region as well as India, which are experiencing rapid economic growths. Through meetings and visits at the related governmental organizations as well as private sector, in addition to interactions with the local people in the respective country, this program aims at fostering a deeper understanding among the program participants pertaining to the current situation as well as issues facing both Japan and the country visited. This program also hopes to promote future regional alliances by installing an international perspective in the program participants, who are mainly responsible for international affairs in their respective local governments in Japan.

For the program in 2016, Japanese local government officials visited Singapore which celebrates its 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties with Japan (SJ50), as well as Malaysia which is gaining enormous attention from Japanese local governments in recent years for its vast Muslim tourist market and halal certification.

For the objective of promoting intercultural understandings between Japan, Singapore and Malaysia, program participants from Japan were given the chance to interact with local students of Japanese Language in Singapore as well as alumni of Japanese universities in Malaysia. This provided an invaluable

platform for the participants to deepen their mutual understandings of the cultural similarities and differences, which is hoped to function as a catalyst that will further promote the regional exchange between Japan, Singapore and Malaysia.

Program participants from Japan also consist of officials coming from other professional fields such as industrial development, water and sewage as well as social welfare. During the meetings at local governmental organizations and enterprises including Japanese companies, these participants actively expressed their views on the promotion of Japanese specialty products overseas, promotion of inbound tourism as well as the importance of economic and infrastructure development in a country. In conclusion, the program reaped tangible benefits for the participants from Japan.



Opinion Exchange Session with students from The Japanese Cultural Society

Role of J.CLAIR in International Conferences

J.CLAIR Singapore office attended the United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG-ASPAC) Congress that was held in Gunsan City Jeollabuk-do, South Korea on 5 and 6 September 2016.

UCLG-ASPAC is the Asia-Pacific chapter of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) which represents and pursues the interests of local governments on the world stage. J.CLAIR is participating as an international local government organization member.

Participants of the Congress included various local government representatives such as the President of Governors Association of Korea, and the Mayor of Kochi Municipal Corporation in India. During the Congress, UCLG-ASPAC Secretariat once again urged J.CLAIR Singapore to play a more proactive role in building friendly

cooperative ties between Japanese local governments and foreign local governments.



UCLG-ASPAC Congress

Introducing My Hometown

Kyoto Prefecture – Explore another side of “Kyoto”

Kinkaku-ji, Kiyomizu-dera or Fushimi-inari...they are quite famous and beautiful tourist spots in Kyoto but are extremely crowded with an enormous number of tourists. If you are visiting Kyoto, you should explore the lesser-known areas in Kyoto.

“Kyoto” is not only limited to the central city zone. In the north-west, you can relax in the lush greenery area which is popular for cherry blossoms and riches of the soil such as sweet chestnuts and fresh mushrooms.

Meanwhile, northern Kyoto has several beautiful beaches. You can get there in 2-3 hours by car or train and go swimming as well as surfing during the hot summer season, or feast on superb local crabs in snowy winter.

Last but not least, in southern Kyoto, you will have your breath taken away by the tidy tea gardens and be blown away by the exquisite aroma and flavour of Uji matcha tea.

Takashi Nabeoka, Deputy Executive Director, J.CLAIR Singapore



“Ama-no-Hashidate”, one of the three most scenic spots in Japan

Hyogo Prefecture – A Congregation of Individually Unique “Nations”

Due to the differences in history, customs and industries, Hyogo Prefecture can be largely divided into 5 regions, namely, Settsu (Kobe and Hanshin area), Harima, Tajima, Tamba and Awaji; with each of the regions possessing its own charms and attractions.

Arima Onsen in Kobe is one of Japan’s oldest hot springs and the uptown area in Kobe still retains a street that houses western-styled residences lived by foreigners in the past, called the *Kitano ijin-kan gai*.

The Harima region is home to UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site, the Himeji Castle, which has preserved both the exterior and interior design as well as characteristics of the castle from when it was built.

In the northern part of Hyogo Prefecture lie the Hachi Highlands and Hachi-Kita Highlands in the Tajima region, one of the most famous ski resorts in Japan’s Kansai area, as well as the Shirozaki Onsen that gives off an ancient charm with its willow trees-lined streets.

The Tamba region is known for being a producer of black beans, and the Yotaku Temple in Sanda City is a beautiful sight to behold in June and July with the blooming of Japanese irises.

Finally, you can also travel to Awaji Island from Kobe by taking the Akashi Kaikyo Bridge, the world’s longest suspension bridge, where you can go to the resort facilities in Awaji Yumebutai, a site with hotels, conference halls, conservatories, restaurants and national parks etc.

Tatsuya Tokunaga, Senior Deputy Director, J.CLAIR Singapore



The Himeji Castle

Kitakyushu City

— From Environmental Cooperation to Environmental Business

Located at the most northern part of Kyushu island, Kitakyushu City has long played an important role in both land and sea transportation, prospering as a gateway to Kyushu.

Faced with serious issues of air and sea pollution in the 1960s due to rapid industrial development, Kitakyushu City was once infamously known for its “seven-colored skies” and “sea of death”. However, with cooperation from the city’s administration, businesses and local community groups such as the women’s association etc., these challenges were eventually overcome. Now, the city utilizes its experiences by actively taking part in international cooperative activities in China and Southeast Asia that help to improve the environmental situations in these regions. Some examples of such initiatives by the city in the recent years include working with local businesses in Kitakyushu to set up a waste segregation facility in Indonesia’s Surabaya City, as well as successfully linking up a local bubble soap company with an Indonesian company to produce an extinguishing agent used to put out peat fires.

Yuji Kato, Deputy Director, J.CLAIR Singapore



The Kanmon Straits that connects Kyushu to Japan’s main island

Tokyo Metropolitan – Connections and New Beginnings

The capital city of Tokyo is a fascinating and diverse metropolis that has inherited good old Japanese traditions on the one hand but at the same time, has also fused traditions with cutting-edge technology to continuously create new value and reinvent itself.

In planning for the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020 as well as the city's future beyond, Tokyo has embarked on an extensive campaign to establish and promote a "Tokyo Brand" that aims to invite everybody to connect with Tokyo and to strengthen Tokyo's appeal as a tourism destination.

Specifically, the campaign centres on 5 keywords, "Unique," "Excellent," "Exciting," "Delight," "Comfort," that describe Tokyo and emphasize the myriad of fun experiences one can expect. It is hoped that these efforts will increase the number of worldwide fans of Tokyo. For more information, please visit the TOKYO BRAND official website (<http://andtokyo.jp/en/>).

Keisuke Kogure, Deputy Director, J.CLAIR Singapore



The Tokyo Bay Area©TCVB

Leverage your local government's capacity building through J.CLAIR's programs and activities!

J.CLAIR Singapore implements the following programs with the objective of strengthening the collaborations between local governments in Japan and the ASEAN region as well as India. It is hoped that local governments in the region could fully utilize these programs so as to leverage their efforts in capacity building.

Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar

This is a 1 week seminar whereby overseas local government officials are invited to Japan to discuss and exchange information on the current situation as well as various issues of local administration facing local governments in both Japan and their home countries. In addition to a 2-day lecture program on Japan's local administration system in Tokyo, the seminar also encourages regional exchange as participants are given the opportunity to visit local governments during their stay in Japan, go on site visits and have the opportunity to deepen their understanding of Japanese culture. For the seminar in 2016, participants will be visiting Miyazaki Prefecture in southern Japan.



Local Government International Cooperation Specialist Dispatch Project

There exists a very high number of Japanese local government officials who are experts that possess highly specialized skills and knowledge in their respective fields. With the aim of utilizing

the professional knowledge and skills accumulated by Japanese local governments so as to improve the quality of local administration, technical expertise as well as human resources in the overseas local governments, over the years J.CLAIR Singapore has been dispatching Japanese local government officials (including retirees) who have knowledge or technical skills in various fields as specialists to local governments in the ASEAN region and India.



Local Government Officials Training Program (LGOTP)

This is a 6~12 months program that recruits overseas local government officials to train with Japanese local governments. Selected trainees will be assigned to designated Japanese local governments so as to acquire new knowledge and skills in certain fields from these local governments. It is hoped that the program could contribute to the development of overseas regions, promote knowledge transfer of Japanese expertise, in addition to building networks of contact between local governments in Japan and the world.



For further information on our activity of Japanese Local Authorities, please contact J.CLAIR Singapore (formerly CLAIR Singapore)

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