



JLGC NEWSLETTER

Japan Local Government Center (CLAIR, New York)

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1. 2019 CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program

The 2019 CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program was held from November 4th to November 13th.

This program affords senior state and local government officials an opportunity to experience Japanese government administration first hand. This year the program was held in Tokyo and Kitaibaraki City.



The theme of the program was “Construction, Destruction, and Reconstruction: Creating Community Identity through Art and Recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake”. Kitaibaraki City is famous for its cultural heritage. There is Okakura Kakuzō (also known as Okakura Tenshin), the founder of the Tokyo School of Fine Arts. Okakura Kakuzō spent his last years in Kitaibaraki City. Also, there is Ujo Noguchi a poet who devoted himself to nursery rhymes. The city has used these cultural assets to promote tourism. At the same time, the city is working assiduously to repair the damage done by the Great East Japan Earthquake and

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Tsunami. Using what it calls “safety and security”, the city believes its rebuilding is giving the residents an opportunity to develop a new sense of community. Participants held discussions with their counterparts in Japan. Also, they interacted with local people and immersed themselves in the traditional Japanese culture of the area (soba noodle-making, glass making, etc.).



Comments from the participants



Mr. Dean Sauriol
President

**Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and
Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO)**

Upon my departure for the 2019 CLAIR Local Government Exchange I really had no idea what I was in store for and not sure what to think of this venture. I am humbled and pleased to say the 11 days spent in Japan were not only an incredible journey but a life experience that I will never forget.

I take home tremendous memories, great new friendships from our group, which were a terrific bunch from diverse parts of North America, and a sense of pride to have been part of such a great program. I am honoured and humbled to have been chosen to participate

in this exchange with other fun loving and professional individuals The Japan / Tokyo experience was one of amazement and beauty. From the cleanliness to the structure I learnt that the issues that we have are both very challenging and similar.

The story of Kitaibaraki City is an amazing story of Construction, Destruction and Reconstruction following the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. Their story was not only moving but an amazing one.

Their amazing reaction and accomplishments to this disaster was a great source of inspiration to me and the others. Mayor Toyoda and his staff of Kitaibaraki City did an amazing job both for hosting us and even better for the incredible work following the disaster. A thank you must go out to the city for tremendous hospitality. From the courtesy visits, to the site visits to the accommodations, food and hospitality it was excellent and nothing could have been done to make it any better.

A warm thank you goes out to the Murata family for hosting me overnight in their home and making me feel so welcome. From the traditional food to a sip of Sake it was delightful and so much appreciated. It gave me a tremendous appreciation for their culture and way of life.

In conclusion CLAIR must be congratulated in creating such a program that allows one to make lifelong friendships along with providing us with a cultural experience through our municipal work. I will be forever grateful!



Mr. Geoff McKnight
Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Bradford
West Gwillimbury
The Canadian Association of Municipal
Administrators (CAMA)

For the past 25+ years, I have had the good fortune to work for several municipal governments across Southern Ontario and work with a large number of remarkably bright and passionate professionals. I've enjoyed all elements of my career but I have no doubt that when the day comes to sit back and reflect on my experiences, the CLAIR trip to Japan will stand among the highlights!

The 2019 CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program provided a unique opportunity to learn

about Japan's inter-governmental relationship and programs as well as the country's rich culture and history. To experience this jointly with seven other municipal, state and county "enthusiasts" from Canada and the U.S. added immensely to our collective perspective, learning and enjoyment.

The highlight of the trip were the days spent in Kitaibaraki in Ibaraki Prefecture. The resilience demonstrated by the city and its leaders in recovering from the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011 is remarkable and inspiring.

Our hosts were so gracious and accommodating, and the CLAIR team provided a first-class experience—an experience that I will not forget!



Mr. Brian Namey
Chief Public Affairs Officer
National Association of Counties (NACo)

During the 2019 CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program, I had the tremendous opportunity to see more of Japan than most Americans will ever see. Focusing on the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, I gained perspectives on disaster preparedness and recovery that are relevant to communities around the globe.

Like many American counties that have experienced natural disasters, Kitaibaraki City has demonstrated the importance of rebuilding not to replace what we had in the past but to be better prepared for the future. This principle was evident in everything we saw—the fire department and hospital, the sea wall, the roadwork and drainage system and more.

We also saw how Kitaibaraki City has leveraged its assets, including the arts and commerce, to build more resilient, vibrant communities.

While the Kitaibaraki region is very different from American communities—especially historically and culturally—the similarities are equally striking. Perhaps most profound is our passion for serving the public. Japanese officials as well as American county leaders are passionate about improving residents' quality of life. Many thanks to CLAIR and our Japanese hosts for the extraordinary experience.



Ms. Tahra Johnson
**Program Director, Public Health and Maternal
 & Child Health**

**National Conference of State Legislatures
 (NCSL)**

I thoroughly enjoyed the CLAIR Fellowship trip to Japan. It was a privilege and an honor to be a part of the 2019 program with such an esteemed group of professionals. It was my first time in Japan and I enjoyed learning about the cultural differences and similarities. It was very helpful to learn about the central, prefecture and local government structures while understanding the multi-dimensional efforts to address rebuilding, recovery and revitalization after the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. I was impressed with the amount of resources dedicated to these efforts by all levels of government.

The hospitality of the people, especially in Kitaibaraki, was outstanding. Even when there were language barriers, people made us feel welcome and we made connections. From soba noodle making to visiting the fire station and art galleries, I especially enjoyed the welcome and sendoffs from each of our site visits. Every person we met made us feel welcome. Thank you CLAIR staff, for making this an unforgettable experience.

Fellowship Exchange Program 2019

Date	Schedule	Accommodation
Nov 4	<u>Arrive in Japan</u> Orientation	Tokyo
Nov 5	<u>Tokyo Programme</u> Site Visit : A Walk through Meiji Jingu Shrine Lecture : "Recovery from the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake" Lecture : Japanese Local Government System Welcome Reception hosted by CLAIR	Tokyo
Nov 6	<u>Tokyo Programme</u> Site Visit : National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo Site Visit : RICOH Business Innovation Lounge Opinion Exchange with Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) Courtesy Visit to Director-General for Policy Coordination (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC)) Opinion Exchange with MIC Staff Welcome Reception hosted by MIC	Tokyo

Fellowship Exchange Program 2019

Date	Schedule	Accommodation
Nov 7	<p><u>Regional Programme (Kitaibaraki City)</u></p> <p>Courtesy Visit to the Mayor of Kitaibaraki City Presentation on Kitaibaraki City Site Visit : JX Nippon Mining and Metals Corporation Site Visit : Levee Welcome Reception hosted by Kitaibaraki City</p>	Kitaibaraki City, Ibaraki Prefecture
Nov 8	<p><u>Regional Programme (Kitaibaraki City)</u></p> <p>Site Visit : Kitaibaraki City's New Fire Department (Fuel Storage) Site Visit : Futatsujima Highland Park Site Visit : Kitaibaraki City Hospital Site Visit : Hirakata Disaster Prevention Collective Home Relocation Site and Post-Disaster Temporary Housing Site Visit : Otsu Harbor, Otsu Fishing Cooperative, Non-Destructive Radioactivity Inspection Center Site Visit : Tanitousuisan Co. Ltd. Site Visit : Kitaibaraki Museum of Fishing History ("Yo-Soro")</p>	Kitaibaraki City
Nov 9	<p><u>Regional Programme (Kitaibaraki City)</u></p> <p>Site Visit : Rokkakudo Site Visit : Cape Izura Park/Film Set for Tenshin Site Visit : Tenshin Memorial Museum of Art Site Visit : Kitamachi Sekimoto Central Road, National Route 6 Nakaso/ Sekimoto Bypass Explanation Site Visit : Lifelong Learning Center "Trèfle" Site Visit : Kitaiba Site Visit : Gallery ARIGATEE Meet with Host Family</p>	Kitaibaraki City
Nov 10	<p><u>Regional Programme (Kitaibaraki City)</u></p> <p>Site Visit : Aquamarine Fukushima (Sanuka Recovery Work) Site Visit : Iwaki Lalamew</p>	Kitaibaraki City
Nov 11	<p><u>Regional Programme (Kitaibaraki City)</u></p> <p>Site Visit : Museum of Ujo Noguchi Site Visit : Ujo Noguchi's Birth Home Site Visit : Hanakawa Water Purification Plant Site Visit : Jorenji Temple Site Visit : Silica Glass Studio (Glass Bead Craft Experience) Site Visit : Jukkukubori Site Visit : Jiro Hiruta Sculpture Gallery Site Visit : Green Workshop (Soba Noodle-Making Experience)</p>	Kitaibaraki City
Nov 12	<p><u>Regional Programme (Kitaibaraki City)</u></p> <p>Opinion Exchange Session Farewell Luncheon hosted by CLAIR Return to Tokyo</p>	Tokyo
Nov 13	<u>Departure from Japan</u>	—

2. *Introduction of New JLGC Staff*



Miyako Kusakabe

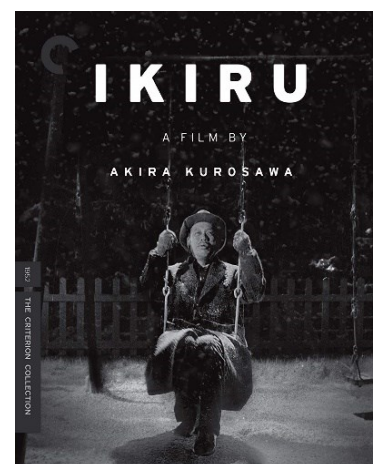
Counsellor / Deputy Executive Director /
Representative of Ministry of Internal
Affairs and Communications

It is my great pleasure to introduce myself to everyone connected to JLGC (CLAIR, NY). My name is Miyako Kusakabe, the Deputy Executive Director of JLGC as of 16 January.

I have worked for the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) for almost 19 years. I have been involved in local administration issues most of the time, and was given opportunities to work for a prefecture and a city.

Also, I worked for CLAIR headquarters in 2018 as the Director of the Department of International Exchange, Cooperation and Economic Relations. At that time, I joined the 25th anniversary of the Fellowship Program held in Washington, D.C., in September, and part of the Fellowship Program held in Okayama Prefecture after that. I greatly look forward to seeing participants of both in North America.

Have you ever watched “*Ikiru*” (“To Live”) by Kurosawa? The film is about a boring, inactive local government official who has kept such a working habit for more than 30 years. One day, he learns that he has terminal cancer, and reflects on his wasted life. As a result, he decides to live his own life, mends his ways and becomes an enthusiastic official devoted to supporting the local community. He wants to create a children’s playground. He dies soon after completing his project. His co-workers praise his great job at his funeral, but, soon after that, they are back to normal—that is, their boring inactive way of working. While the movie was created almost 70 years ago, the public image of the way local government officials work has barely changed.



Even if that was true then, nowadays, Japanese local governments do a wider range of duties with a smaller number of officials. In addition, local authorities face a big challenge; depopulation. It has been a problem in rural areas for a long time, but things have got worse because the total population of Japan has started to decline. That means that our former model to counteract rural depopulation with urban growth does not work anymore. Also, it will be difficult to maintain the same amount of tax income and size of government organization. So, Japanese local governments, regardless of whether or not they are big or small, now seriously have to think about how they can revitalize their communities and develop their economies.

Agendas and interests of local governments in the U.S. and Canada are partly similar and partly different from Japanese ones. Cultures and values in the three countries are apparently different. Even so, or perhaps because of that, I believe that we can benefit from an exchange of opinions on various local government issues. I do hope to learn a lot from North America and to give you a new perspective based on my experiences in Japan.

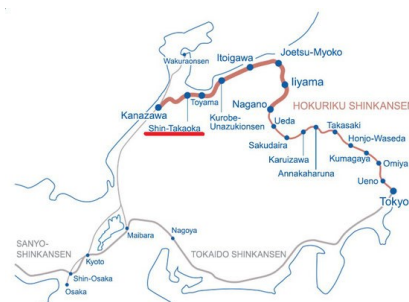
Let me give you an example of these experiences. One of the most notable jobs for me was my three-year experience as the Director of Planning and Finance for Takaoka City, Toyama



Prefecture. Takaoka is a middle-sized city located in central Japan. Commerce and the metal industry, both of which have long traditions, are the identity of the city. The icon of the city is the bronze Great Buddha statue which was built in 1933. Another famous point is the high-quality living environment. Takaoka and the cities around dominate the higher end of “the Liveable City Ranking” every year because of a low crime rate, good education, relatively roomy houses, and so forth.



The city was in a phase of great transformation when I was there between 2014 and 2016, as the new bullet train (Hokuriku Shinkansen) started operation in March 2015. That has made a huge impact on the city in many ways, and produced a variety of different reactions. First of all, the new train made it possible to come to Takaoka directly from Tokyo in two and a half hours, whereas it had taken more than four hours and needed a transfer before. Kanazawa, the terminal station and stop next to Takaoka, has attracted a huge number of tourists since the new train’s launch. Takaoka, on the other hand, has been relatively quiet, even though



the number of tourists increased by 10 per cent. This is so partly because Takaoka is an industrial city rather than a tourist city, but it raised a question about the city's lack of an effective tourism strategy.

As it is far from realistic to expect to change the situation dramatically in a short period, we adopted an incremental approach. We reviewed our history and tried to find what was unique to life in Takaoka. Actually, it was not easy to do this because the local people did not recognize the city's strengths. Outsiders were able to help us explain Takaoka's unique qualities. Then we decided to focus on our historical streetscapes and traditional



Historical streetscape of Kanaya-machi



Metal manufacturing experience

manufacturing to enhance the attractiveness of the city. Now new shops, restaurants and a guest house are open in Kanaya-machi, where traditional houses make a beautiful streetscape. Nevertheless, they are not just for tourists, but also for local people. The community discussed what they needed in their neighborhood so that they could balance attracting tourists and maintaining the living environment. Also, several new places opened to show off traditional manufacturing workshops. One company even built a new factory so that it could show how its products are made. Engagement and understanding of local business and communities are key.

The result is not too bad so far. Incoming tourists have increased little by little; not phenomenally though. More importantly, stunning people and things in the city have become more visible, and local people have become aware of what to be proud of in their city.

Another big change for the city is Shin-Takaoka station, which was built one mile south of Takaoka station. Moreover, a mega shopping mall with a huge parking space was added near the new station. This development affected the flow of people and did damage to service industries in "the old town". Shops and even offices prefer to move south from the traditional business/commercial district to the north of Takaoka Station. Last summer, the only department store in Takaoka finally closed down. As a proud commercial city, some people, including local assembly members, regret the decline of the downtown. Also, a decreasing population makes it difficult to maintain an expanded urban area. It has become a subject of great discussion in the city management, which is still continuing. The city has not found a good solution to this matter so far.



This is only a small part of my experiences, but might be a good example to discuss issues that Japanese local governments face and to think about similarities and differences between North America and Japan. If you are interested in Takaoka, your questions are always welcome. Also, JLGC is preparing for an opportunity to let you know more about Takaoka to have a good discussion later this year. More news will follow.

Concluding my remarks, I would like to express my deepest gratitude for your continuing support for us. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible during my tenure, and hope to contribute to a stronger relationship between local governments in North America and Japan.



Miho Tachi

Assistant Director / Representative
of Ibaraki Prefecture

Hello, my name is Miho Tachi. I came from Ibaraki Prefecture. Since joining the Ibaraki Prefectural government, I have worked in four departments. First, I worked in the tax office. My job was to determine the tax to be paid on new buildings. Second was the statistics department. Third, I worked on tuition subsidies for parents sending their children to private schools in Ibaraki. Fourth was the regional promotion department, where I was promoting the northern part of the prefecture. In order to attract people to that part of the prefecture, I promoted a large scale art festival. We made about 100 art-works and set them up in the town or in schools that had been closed.

Today, I'd like to introduce Ibaraki to you.

Specific Features of Ibaraki Prefecture

Location

Ibaraki is located in the northern part of the Kanto region. The distance from the prefectural capital, Mito, to the nation's capital, Tokyo, is 60 miles, while the distance from Narita Airport, Japan's international gateway, to Tsukuba Science City in Ibaraki is 20 miles.



Flowers

Kairakuen Garden (Mito)

Plum blossoms mark the arrival of spring in Japan. Kairakuen Park is home to around 3,000 plums which flower from late February to March. Kairakuen also features various attractions which can be enjoyed throughout the year, such as the Kobuntei Villa and a lush bamboo forest. Tokiwa Shrine is situated near the main entrance to the park.



Nemophila at Hitachi Seaside Park

From mid-April to early May, nearly 4.5 million nemophila flowers cover a 3.5 hectare area of hillside in Hitachi Seaside Park. The sea of blue flowers merges with the sky in an endless vista. Enjoy a stroll through the flowers, taking in the views and refreshing sea breeze as you go.



Itako Iris Festival (Itako)

Itako City is a waterfront city surrounded by the ocean on one side and rivers and lakes on the others. The city is most famous for its Iris Festival in which nearly one million iris plants fill the city with innumerable shades of purple. During the festival from late May through late June, visitors can also see a traditional ceremony in which a bride in a stunning white wedding kimono travels by boat to join her new husband's family, as well as enjoy leisurely rowboat cruises on the city's many canals.



Festival

Ishioka Festival

The Ishioka Festival in September is one of the three most popular festivals in the Kanto region. You will be awed by the huge, magnificent portable shrine, where the deity is believed to temporarily stay, as well as be amazed at the gorgeous festival floats and spirited lion mask performances. You can also see sumo matches and kagura (dancing to music), both of which afford you the opportunity of getting a close-up view of traditional cultural beauty and energy.



Products

There are more than 200 pottery makers in Kasama, where many ceramic artists from other areas in Japan and overseas flock to live and pursue their art. Each piece of Kasama-yaki pottery reflects its maker's creativity and unique style. Some of the designs are quite innovative. You are sure to find many pieces that appeal to you.



Food

Blessed with fertile earth, the ocean, mountains, and a mild climate, Ibaraki is a cornucopia for abundant foodstuffs. Ibaraki boasts the highest production of agricultural products such as melons, lotus roots, and green peppers nationally. Each region inside the prefecture utilizes their area's specific characteristics in order to produce various agricultural and marine products, including sea food such as Kasama open sea clams and angler fish, as well as animal products such as Hitachi beef.



Sake

Blessed with plentiful water sources, Ibaraki has nearly 40 Japanese sake breweries, and among them, Japan's oldest sake brewery in Kasama, Sudo Honke, is to be recommended. Come and discover the great varieties of sake that can be found in Ibaraki.





Yoshimi Yanai

Assistant Director/ Representative of
Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department

My name is Yoshimi Yanai. I've been working for Japan Local Government Center since last April. I've been dispatched to JLGC from the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department. This is the biggest police department in Japan. We have more than 43,000 police officers and about 3,000 civilian staff. The size is a little bit bigger than the New York Police Department. Anyway, as it just became 25 years since I became a police officer in Tokyo, I have a bit of knowledge of 'Deep Tokyo'. If you need to know about famous towns such as Shinjuku, Asakusa and Ginza, I recommend you get guide books at a book store. This time, though I would like to introduce you to a deeper Tokyo, but this is just between you and me!

'Sento' (Public Bath)

Have you ever experienced a 'Sento', a Japanese traditional public bath? Taking the same big bath with strangers will surely be an unforgettable memory for you. You don't have to go outside of Tokyo, because there are more than five hundred Sentos in Tokyo to choose from, and it costs less than \$5! Their facilities have basically only a dressing place, washing space and bath filled with hot water, but some have a sauna, Jacuzzi, and mild electric-shock and daily aroma baths for your relaxation. Soaking in a hot bath may be a little bit tough for you, (the temperature of the hot water is about 108 degrees Fahrenheit), but drinking cold milk or cold café au lait after bathing is very special!



The rule for using the Sento is very simple. Take off all your clothes and wash your body before soaking in the bath. Even if you feel hot, you cannot add cold water. Although these are not at all gorgeous, you can feel local atmosphere with local people. The history of Sento begins in the 6th century. Originally, bathing was a Buddhist

religious practice, to purify themselves was one of the important things for praying. Some temples had steam baths which were provided not only to those praying but also to sick and poor people. Later, the wealthy began to have their own baths in their houses and enjoyed it themselves. Hundreds of years later, the first public baths were built in the 16th century in Tokyo (called 'Edo' at the time), and their style gradually changed from steam baths to tub-type baths, like today. This type of Sento became very popular and the number gradually increased, until at their peak there were about 2,600 Sento in Tokyo alone in 1965. But since then, the demand for Sento has been decreasing as houses with baths have been increasing until today we have only about 500!

By the way, my favorite tavern in my neighborhood is next to the Sento, and I sometimes meet my friends there. On top of that, having beer after bathing is wonderful!

'Ekiben' At Tokyo Station

Do you know the word 'Ekiben'? It is a meal box (lunch box) exclusively sold to-go at train stations. Some say that more than 4,000 types of Ekiben are sold at stations throughout Japan, but nobody has actually counted. Since Tokyo Station is one of main stations in Japan, a large variety of Ekiben are sold there, from simple ones such as sandwiches and rice balls to gorgeous ones such as steaks and Unadon (rice bowl topped with baked eels).



'Makunouchi' is an ever-popular menu item as a mixed meal box. As some shops come from outlying areas to this station, you can enjoy local food from the surrounding region while staying in Tokyo. The price is usually from \$10 to \$20.

Let me introduce a typical original Tokyo Ekiben to you. We call this 'Fukagawameshi'. This is a kind of rice cooked with soy sauce, clams, and ginger, and was typical for fishermen in Fukagawa Town. There were lots of fishermen there until 1963, but with the development of this area, the fishermen have disappeared. This traditional menu also disappeared for a while, but due to the efforts of the local people, this has been revived and handed on to a new generation. Anyway, the combination with clams and soy sauce is excellent! Please try it! Foreign travelers tend to go to restaurants such as sushi bars and ramen shops, but by all means try Ekiben once during your stay. Eating them on a long-

distance train such as the Shinkansen (Bullet Train) is fun, but is not only way. If the weather is fine, you can bring them to a park or riverbank and it will be a fun memory for you. However, be careful, because eating them on a regular commuter train is bad manners in Japan.

Stay at 'Minshuku' (Japanese-Style B&B)

If you are a little tired of walking the cities and staying in a luxury hotel, I recommend you go on an overnight trip to western Tokyo. And by all means, I want you to stay at the guest house called 'Minshuku' there. Minshuku are very similar to B&B's in the US, but most offer supper. Each one has its own characteristics, such as food, alcohol, and scenery, so you can choose one that suits you best.

As you know, Tokyo is a metropolis, but the western part has surprisingly rural areas. Ome City, Akiruno City, Okutama Town and Hinohara Village are typical rural areas. As there are historical shrines and temples in those area, you can visit there while enjoying a hike, if you like. It takes only about 1 hour from downtown Shinjuku by local train and costs only \$10 to get you there. It may not seem like wild nature for Americans, but in this area, people live quietly in harmony with nature. To stay at a Minshuku is very different from urban hotels, but you can enjoy local cuisine, sake and stories, which will be offered by the owner. Actually, I often visit my favorite one, and whenever I visit there I feel like I came to my relative's house and I can relax very much.



If you want me to introduce one, I recommend you try 'Kanzukuriso' (see attached photo) in Hinohara Village. It has a thatched roof and offers local foods such as wild vegetables which are taken from around there, konnyaku (paste made from elephant yam), river fish and hand-made buckwheat noodles. As for the bath, you can have a cypress bath that is traditional and very popular in Japan. The fee is reasonable; less than \$100 per night, including dinner and breakfast.

This time, I can introduce only a few things to you in this brief article, but please try at least one of these if you are interested. I hope it will be a good memory for your Tokyo trip!