

WIT Cross-Border Learning Journey in Fukushima

~ US-Japan Collaboration for a Resilient Civil Society

World in Tohoku (WIT)

June 4, 2017

Program Description

Cross-Border Learning Journey in Fukushima is a one-week program (2017/10/11-2017/10/16) that will be held in Tohoku, the region affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. In this immersive program organized by World in Tohoku (WIT¹), a diverse group of stakeholders from both the U.S. and Japan, including social entrepreneurs², local nonprofits, and professionals with expertise from the field, will convene and address various social issues in Tohoku. During this program, participants will learn about the restoration process in Fukushima, discuss opportunities and challenges, and collaborate to accelerate the social impact of rebuilding efforts.

The program will be implemented in the coastal area of Fukushima prefecture, where the evacuation order due to the Fukushima nuclear disaster was lifted as of April 2017. Unlike the other disaster-stricken area, this area still faces the challenges of rebuilding their community from scratch with the limited resources and capacity from local community members.

Objectives

The Learning Journey aims to create a cross-border and cross-sector³ collaboration platform of social entrepreneurs and professionals from diverse backgrounds, which will contribute towards fostering long-term relationships between American and Japanese citizens to solve social issues together.

This program in Fukushima will also provide participants with a rare opportunity to learn firsthand about the current situation of Fukushima, and the complexity of aftermath from the region's three-fold disasters – earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accidents.

¹ WIT is a not-for-profit organization established in 2011 to support social entrepreneurs in the disaster-affected Tohoku. To date, WIT has assisted 18 social entrepreneurs in various fields including education, poverty alleviation, community development, women empowerment, and nursing care, in improving their organizational capacity, fundraising, connecting with supporters with different expertise, and more. For details, please visit WIT's website (<http://worldintohoku.org/>).

² Social entrepreneurs are entrepreneurs who are working to solve social issues by addressing root causes of the problems. Their legal entities vary from a nonprofit organization to shareholder company depending on their business and funding model.

³ WIT aims to create a community of people across different countries (for now, mainly between US and Japan) and different sectors (business, nonprofit, academic, and public), who collaborate together to solve social issues and make a difference.

Program Participants

- Local social entrepreneurs and nonprofits: Several organizations that are working to rebuild Fukushima, including an association of 3.11 survivors, a science education venture, a silk fabric studio and others.
- Participants from the US: 5-10 participants from diverse backgrounds including, but not limited to, entrepreneurship, finance, branding/marketing, community development, education, tourism, arts and culture, food and restaurant industry, etc.
- Participants from Japan: 5-10 participants from diverse backgrounds, including but not limited to, entrepreneurship, finance, branding/marketing, community development, education, tourism, arts and culture, food and restaurant industry, etc.

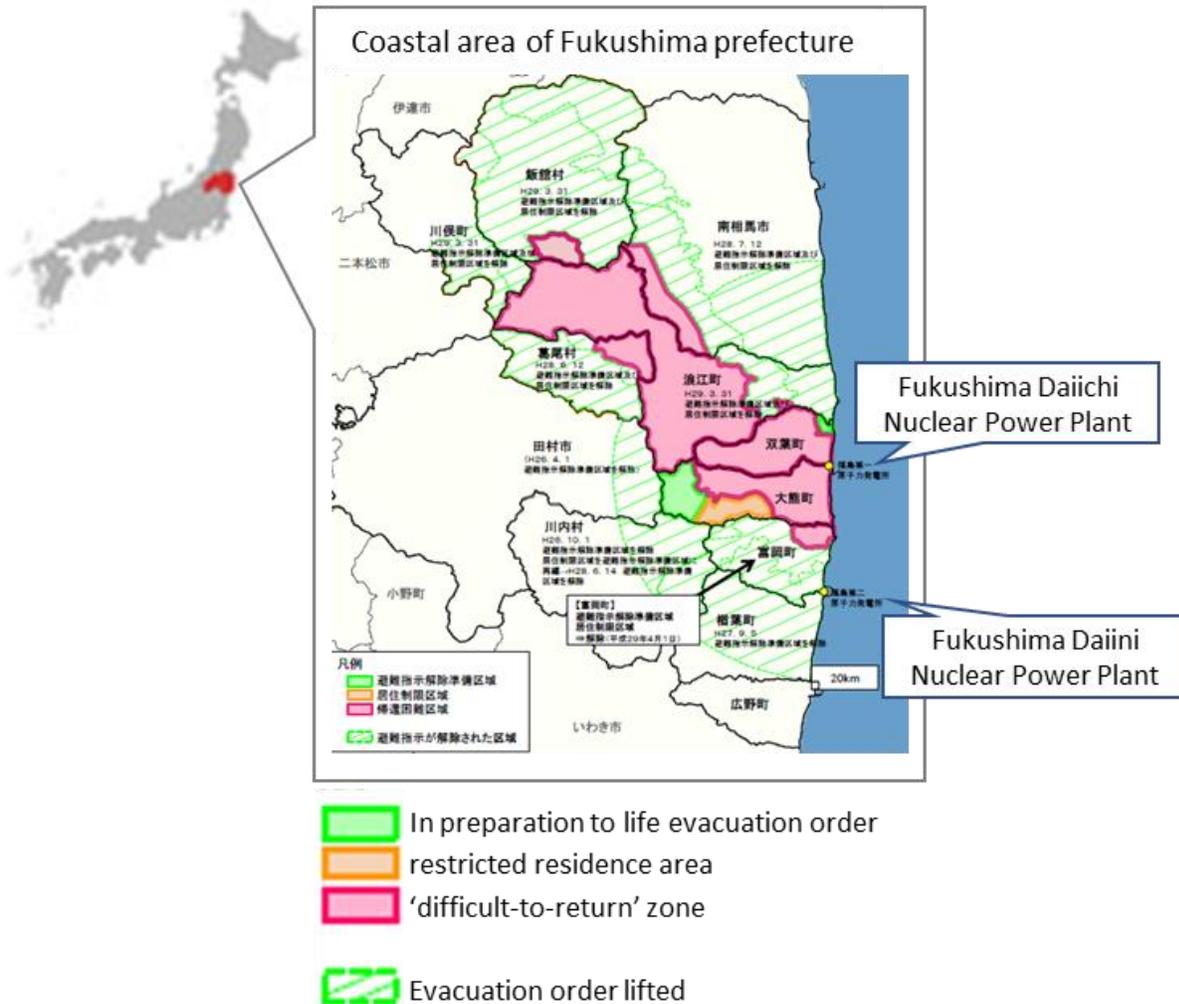
Activities and Schedule

The program will start on the afternoon of October 11th, 2017 and officially end on the evening of October 15th, with an optional Tohoku tour day on October 16th.

- **October 11th Wednesday - Day 1: Orientation & Welcome Dinner**
WIT will host an orientation session for US participants to gain an understanding about the general landscape of the ecosystem and challenges around social ventures in Japan. Participants will also have the opportunity to ask questions about the itinerary and objectives.
A Welcome Dinner with all participants and WIT stakeholders will follow the orientation to casually get to know and bond with one other.
- **Oct. 12th Thursday - Day 2: Field visit to coastal area**
The US-Japan participants will visit the coastal area of Fukushima and learn about the current situation of rebuilding. Potential speakers will include leaders from local government, nuclear power plants, and schools. USJC member participants will have an opportunity to meet with TOMODACHI alumni in Fukushima.
- **Oct. 13th Friday ~ 15th Sunday - Day 3 ~ 5: Field visits and workshop with social entrepreneurs**
The US-Japan participants will visit participating organizations' work sites in various locations across Fukushima. Participants will learn first-hand about the organization's challenges and opportunities, and engage in deep dialogue with organization members to build trust and collaborate with each other to scale the rebuilding efforts. The workshop will be facilitated by WIT and experienced facilitators, and conducted both in English and Japanese.
- **Oct. 16th Monday - Day 6: Optional Tohoku Tour:**
After the workshop, the participants will enjoy the hot spring and food in Tohoku. This part is optional for the participants, but it is a great opportunity to unwind and further strengthen bonding among the participants.

Location

From Day 2 to Day 5 of the Learning Journey will be hosted mainly in the coastal area of Fukushima, where the evacuation order was lifted as of April 2017 and residents are returning to their home (green-shaded in the below map). Exact locations of field visits will be decided with participating local organizations.



Program Fee

Item	Cost per person	Details
Program fee *	\$1000	This may be reduced if WIT receives external funding.
In Japan: Transportation, accommodation, meals and other necessary expenses	Approx. \$1500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ \$1050 Hotel: \$150*7 nights from Tuesday night to Sunday night. ❖ \$178 JR pass: 5-day flexible pass of JR East rail per person (price as of 2017 May)⁴ ❖ \$240 Meals: \$40/day * 6 days
US-Japan flight	Approx. \$1200	Participants to arrange
Stipend from WIT	▲ Approx. \$300	Stipend to partially cover flight costs. Grant from Japan Foundation.
Total	Approx. \$3400	

* Program fee is \$0 for WIT Senior Accelerators, and \$800 for WIT Associate Accelerators.

Pre/Post-Program Timeline

Month	Activities
June 2017	WIT recruits participating social entrepreneurs and nonprofits in Fukushima Application open for US-Japan participants
July	Application due for US participants (7/15) Skype individual interviews with US applicants Finalize US participants
Aug	Application due for Japan participants Skype individual interviews with Japan applicants Finalize Japan participants
Sep	Conference calls and online community platform for US-Japan participants
Oct	Cross-Border Learning Journey in Fukushima
Nov-Dec	Feedback conference calls
Feb-Mar	Quarterly check-in conference call
May-June	Quarterly check-in conference call

⁴ http://www.jreast.co.jp/e/eastpass_t/index.html

How to Apply

Please send an email to info@worldintohoku.org with your name and resume, as well as why you would like to participate in the program. WIT will reach out to you to schedule an individual call to know more about you and answer any questions you may have.

If you have any questions before you apply, please email to Mio Yamamoto (Executive Director of WIT) at mio.yamamoto@worldintohoku.org. Mio is happy to give a talk/presentation as an information session about WIT and this Learning Journey to a group of people upon request.

Program Support

The Japan Foundation and the U.S.-Japan Council generously provide funding support for this program.

Program Need

In Tohoku, many social entrepreneurs emerged after 3.11 to serve people's needs, which had been hard to fill by the public and private sectors only. Four and a half years after the disaster, however, many social entrepreneurs are struggling to sustain their meaningful work due to resource constraints in terms of human resources, management skills, funding, and network. On the other hand, there are social entrepreneurs who want to learn from and collaborate with Americans to scale their models, because 1) the U.S. and Japan have common many social issues as developed countries and can mutually benefit by growing and sharing good solutions, 2) the citizen and entrepreneurial sectors in the U.S. are very much ahead of Japan, and can offer many things to learn to Japanese social entrepreneurs.

While the US topped in the amount of funding support for Tohoku, not many people found ways to support with their expertise and skills other than making donations. For example, a consultant in Los Angeles, who had advised Japanese small medium companies to start business in the US for decades, wanted to help Tohoku with his experience and network, but could not find good opportunity to do so. Another example is a nonprofit management professional in Massachusetts, who is a fourth generation Japanese American. She also wanted to do something for Tohoku with her skills, but language, informational, physical distance and other gaps made it difficult to do so. Those people still care for Tohoku and are seeking for opportunity to make a difference.

In Japan, outside of Tohoku, there are professionals both in business and academic sectors who want to contribute in long-term rebuilding of Tohoku. For example, a professor at Hitotsubashi University, a corporate executive at Recruit Management Solutions, or a manager at Docomo Ventures joined WIT to support Tohoku social entrepreneurs with their experience and skills.

What is really needed in the current and future Tohoku is not a one-way support, but collaborations to revitalize the area and apply the lessons learned and success cases to the other areas of the world. And collaborations for Tohoku will contribute to strengthen the US-Japan relationship around social entrepreneurs and professionals across disciplines.

Testimonials from the Participants of Cross-Border Learning Journey in 2016

“Thanks to Keiko-san, a U.S. participant from New York, Kizuna Mail was able to reach the next step in our global expansion efforts. We plan on using existing resources we currently have in our organization and begin to offer our services to the Japanese population living in America.”

“I was able to see that the staff of Kizuna Mail came back from the Cross-Border LJ with an enhanced sense of mind-and body-connection to the greater world outside our office in Suginami-ward, Tokyo.” – Yukio Oshima (Kizuna Mail Project)

“Professionals from different cultures and languages gathered for the Cross-Border Learning Journey, and despite these differences, everyone was genuinely curious to learn about Mammaru Mama’s work and gave me invaluable advice. Thank you so much!” – Miyoko Sato (Mammaru Mama)

“In discussing Meiten’s global expansion efforts prior to the Cross-Border Learning Journey, most people said that ‘urushi’ would not be as valued in other parts of the world, which was very disappointing for me. To be honest I even questioned whether I should participate in this program, but I’m glad that I did after all. I went in with the mindset of putting all of my thoughts and plans for Meiten forward to the group. I was thrilled that the participants fully understood my vision and voiced that “the world is waiting for ‘urushi’”. The Urushi U.S. Tour I’m now planning for is my token of appreciation towards the participants and the program.”

“In the 10 years I’ve been running this business, I’ve participated in a lot of workshops; however, the Cross-Border Learning Journey exceeded my expectations and it was the first program ever that allowed me to reaffirm and work towards the dream I’ve always had for Meiten. There was extreme value in engaging with such a diverse and global group, as they helped me realize my dreams once again. – Wataru Kainuma (Meiten)

“I gained experiences and knowledge that I would not have been able to learn through books or online programs. I want to continue to find ways in which I can contribute, as well as a way to convey the value of this program to this current generation and generations to come.” – Ayaka Nagasawa (Consulate General of Japan in New York)

“After meeting and engaging with Tohoku social entrepreneurs of Tohoku, all of whom are dealing with such complex social issues in their work, I was reminded of a quote by Courtney Martin that says, “don’t go because you’ve fallen in love with solvability.” The diversity that each individual of this program brings forward is incredible. It’s also hard to believe that this was WIT’s first-ever Cross-

Border Learning Journey, given how seamless and successful this program was this year. This was also the first time for me to meet a range of social entrepreneurs and professionals from various backgrounds in one convening. The Cross-Border Learning Journey is truly a unique and special place and community.” – Geoffrey Hoefer (Omomuki Foundation)

“It was amazing how each social entrepreneur and his/her staff were diving into their respective organization’s vision, mission, and operations throughout the course of the program. The diversity of participants and range of questions that were brought up during the Cross-Border Learning Journey made it possible for the social entrepreneurs to clarify their work to a deeper level.” – Nao Sudo (Japan Stock Exchange)

Reports of 2016 Cross-Border Learning Journey with Pictures

http://worldintohoku.org/lj2016summer_en/

http://worldintohoku.org/lj2016summer2_en/

Narrative Review of 2016 Cross-Border Learning Journey

WIT implemented its inaugural Cross-Border Learning Journey from July 6th to 12th with more than 40 participants from the US and Japan with goals of 1) providing professionals from the US and Japan with opportunity to contribute in sustainable rebuilding of Tohoku and growth of Japanese social entrepreneurs with their expertise, and through which 2) increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the work of social entrepreneurs. The program has been a great success while all the participants are continuing to work together to support the social entrepreneurs.

The nineteen professional participants, shown below, came from diverse backgrounds and geographical locations of the US and Japan (eleven of them were from the US). Some of their profiles include an urban planner, public health educator, executive director of an art-related foundation, former CEO of a Fortune 500 company, serial fin-tech entrepreneur, researcher, professor and social entrepreneur. They came from different regions of the US including New York, Texas, Washington DC, California, Illinois, and Virginia, and Tokyo.

Name	Affiliation
Samjhana Khanal	Independent International Development Consultant, Former Ashoka Director
Mary Kearns	Herban Lifestyle (social enterprise) and M Kearns Research Consulting
Gordon Endow	Gordon & Rees LLP

Nancy Matsumoto	freelance journalist, USJC member
Zakcq Lockrem	Asakura Robinson
Ryota Sekine	Cofounder, Fitness Cubed Inc.
Keiko Sakagami	Supervisor/ Public Health Educator, NY City
Geoffrey Hoefler	Omomuki Foundation
Kia Guarino	Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies
Ayaka Nagasawa	Consulate-General of Japan in New York
Safi Qureshey	Hashi Link、 Give2Asia 他
Nao Sudo	Japan Exchange Group, Inc
Steve Sakanashi	Sekai Creator
Michiyo Oda	Benesse
Christina Ahmadjian	Hitotsubashi University
Keitaro Fujishima	Recruit Management Solutions Co., Ltd.
Yuko Watanabe Sasahara	NTT DOCOMO, Inc.
Erica Ogawa & Emina	Guinness World Records Japan K. K
Vihag Kulshrestha	Guinness World Records Japan K. K
Takuro Maruyama	Guinness World Records Japan K. K
Yuya Kato	Kodansha Ltd.

The nine social enterprise organizations participated in the program tackles many social issue areas of Tohoku, such as poverty alleviation, traditional artisanship, coastal forest conservation, post/prenatal care, eldercare, and social design.

Social Venture Name	Theme
Kizuna Mail	Daily email services to support pre/postnatal mothers and families
Mammaru Mom Iwate	Pre/postnatal care by midwives and local mothers
World Chodoi Lab	Good and Happy Business for Sustainable Society

Asuiku	Distance learning to end cycle of poverty
GIFTHOPE	Collaboration Platform to Connect Nonprofit Organizations in Tohoku and Designers
Meiten	Revitalization of Japan lacquerware
Replus	Healthy Life for Everyone through Preventive Care for Senior People
Watari Green Belt	Recovery of multi-purpose coastal forests
Chimichi	Local development and human resource cultivation

As a result of the one-week Learning Journey, a combination of field visits of social entrepreneurs and immersion in workshops and group discussion, all the US-Japan participants not only provided useful insights for the social entrepreneurs on the spot, but also identified practical things to contribute after the one-week program, learned first-hand about social innovation in Japan, and nurtured a family-like community.

For example, Zakcq Lockrem from Texas is currently supporting Watari Green Belt, one of the participated social venture, to acquire funding from US-based foundations, for them to come visit Texas and Louisiana to learn effective practices of coastal forest conservation, and advising on impact assessment method. Another social venture, Meiten, is planning to market their sustainable Urushi-ware in the US in partnership with many US participants including a journalist, lawyer, and philanthropist. Meiten was also matched with a Japanese participant for mentorship. In revising Meiten’s business plan, the mentor introduced Meiten to other experts in marketing and fundraising. Kizuna Mail, a social venture supporting pre/postnatal mothers, decided to replicate its service to Japanese communities in New York thanks to the participants’ inputs and connections. GIFTHOPE, a social design venture, has already held several skype meetings after the Learning Journey with Ryota Sekine, an entrepreneur from Chicago, to learn from his experience in successful crowdfunding campaign. World Chodoi Lab (WCL), a new social business born out of this Learning Journey, decided to write a book about how to run a sustainable business with local charms. WCL is in conversation with Mary Kearns, a social entrepreneur and consultant from Washington DC, to co-develop products embodying the sustainable business concept. Replus, a preventive eldercare service provider, is learning about how to develop online materials to disseminate their preventive care program, from several participants from the US and Japan with experience in online educational companies.

As mentioned above, the Learning Journey participants are amplifying the network of collaborations beyond just their skills/experience, by introducing further connections to help the social ventures scale their impact. This is possible because the US-Japan participants witnessed the social ventures’ work and passion with their eyes, and built trust relationship with them during and after the program.

Please see an article written by one of the US participant and a journalist, Nancy Matsumoto, for program overview: <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2016/8/4/growing-social-impact-ventures/>.

WIT, the social ventures and the participants started an integrated communication platform to continue the momentum and conversations to actually bring impact to the society. In addition, we have quarterly skype meetings to share progress and challenges of the social ventures.