

CLAIR Singapore Newsletter

Volume. 49
February 2010



• Courtesy visit to Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee



• A briefing at LOTECO



• Factory visit at PPSEZ

Economic and Investment Study Mission in Vietnam and Cambodia

Since 2007, CLAIR Singapore has been implementing a Regional Alliances Promotion Program that consists of a study mission with the aim of enabling Japanese local government staff gain an understanding of the current and upcoming situation of local administration and regional economic policies in ASEAN countries and India. Besides providing an opportunity to acquire first-hand experience of the regions that are of interest to Japan, this program also strives to foster active interaction between local governments by creating a platform for local government personnel from Japan and the host country or city to exchange their views and opinions.

As Southeast Asia moves towards the establishment of an ASEAN Community by 2015 with increased economic cooperation and integration, Vietnam in particular has been gaining much attention as a favorable destination for companies in their "China plus one"¹ strategy, and Cambodia has also been achieving considerable economic growth in recent years. Thus on the occasion of the Mekong-Japan Exchange Year 2009, CLAIR Singapore implemented an "Economic and Investment Study Mission in Vietnam and Cambodia" from 8 to 12 November 2009 for 16 people including overseas representatives of Japanese local governments.

The mission was organized with the following objectives:

- 1 To gain understanding of the current and upcoming situation of the Southern Vietnam region through study visits to industrial infrastructures such as new urban developments, industrial parks and new ports etc.
- 2 To study the surrounding economic zones along the Southern Economic Corridor (the second East-West Economic Corridor) which is expected to become one of the major distribution routes in the Greater Mekong Sub-region economic sphere by traveling on the route from Ho Chi Minh City to Phnom Penh.
- 3 To study the investment environment of Cambodia after the Japan-Cambodia Investment Agreement entered into force in July 2008.
- 4 To exchange opinions with local government organizations, Japanese government organizations and Japanese business associations in the host country.

1. "China plus one" refers to a risk diversification strategy by companies to establish another Asian base outside China in order to reduce overdependence on factories in one country.

A summary of the itinerary of the mission is as follows:

| Date | Summary of Itinerary |
|--------------------------|---|
| 9 Nov 2009 Monday | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing by JETRO Ho Chi Minh and The Japanese Business Association of Ho Chi Minh City (JBAH) JETRO Ho Chi Minh and JBAH gave a briefing about the economic and investment environment in the Southern Vietnam region. • Ho Chi Minh City District 7 and Tan Thuan Export Processing Zone A visit to District 7, a new urban area southeast of Ho Chi Minh City, and to the adjacent Tan Thuan Export Processing Zone. • Courtesy visit to Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee A courtesy visit was arranged with Mr. Hua Ngoc Thuan, vice-chairman of the People's Committee, and other officials. The meeting was about the city's economic and investment environment and included an opinions exchange session. • Economic exchange session with members from Japanese business organizations An opportunity for participants to interact and exchange views with members from Japanese business organizations in Ho Chi Minh City. |
| 10 Nov 2009 Tuesday | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit to The Long Binh Techno Park Development Company (LOTECO) and industries within the techno park The participants visit the Long Binh Techno Park Development Company which is located about 30 km north of Ho Chi Minh City and jointly established by a Japanese corporation and a Vietnamese state-run company under the Ministry of Defense. Factory visits within the techno park were also arranged. • Cai Mep-Thi Vai Port A short visit to the developing Cai Mep-Thi Vai Port, located some 50km south of Ho Chi Minh City. The construction of the port is actively underway and it has been garnering international attention as Vietnam's first international port. |
| 11 Nov 2009 Wednesday | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern Economic Corridor Approximately 1000km in length, the Southern Economic Corridor (the second East-West Economic Corridor) connects Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam. In this mission, the participants experienced traveling on the Ho Chi Minh City – Phnom Penh part of the corridor. • Manhattan (Svay Rieng) Special Economic Zone A visit to Cambodia's first special economic zone located near the border with Vietnam. Factory visits within the zone were arranged. |
| 12 Nov 2009 Thursday | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phnom Penh Special Economic Zone (PPSEZ) A visit to PPSEZ and factory visits to Japanese companies within the zone. Located 18km from the city centre, PPSEZ has resident Japanese staff providing reliable service. • Briefing by Japanese Business Association of Cambodia (JBAC) JBAC gave a briefing about Cambodia's economic and investment environment. • Exchange session with members from Japanese business organizations. An opportunity for participants to interact with members from Japanese business organizations in Cambodia. • Visit to Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC) CDC was established in 1994 based on the Law on the Investment of the Kingdom of Cambodia. In this mission, a visit was arranged to this organization which has sole responsibility for the rehabilitation, development and the oversight of investment activities. |

This mission was highly appraised by participants, citing that it was an itinerary that would otherwise be difficult for an individual local government to arrange.

Further details of this mission will be posted on our CLAIR Singapore website in the future.

Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar 2009

Annually, CLAIR Singapore has been inviting overseas participants from ASEAN countries as well as India to Japan to discuss and exchange information about current situations and challenges faced by local governments in both Japan and their home countries. Besides, gaining a deeper understanding and knowledge about the respective local government systems, the participants were also provided with the opportunity to establish networks of personal contacts with Japanese local governments.

From 26 July to 2 August in 2009, 10 participants from 8 countries gathered in Japan to participate in the "Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar 2009".

Countries participating in the seminars held since 2001

| Country | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Cambodia | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Indonesia | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Laos | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Malaysia | 2 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Myanmar | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Philippines | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Thailand | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Vietnam | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Brunei | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Singapore | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | 10 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 10 | 10 | 11 | 8 | 10 |

This seminar is made up of 2 sections with a seminar in Tokyo and an exchange event in a local authority. In the Tokyo seminar, general lectures on Japanese local administration systems, environmental administration, and introduction of CLAIR's programmes were given. Study visits to a waste disposal site, the headquarters of Metropolitan Police Department, etc. were conducted and a welcome party seeing participation of personnel from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and various Embassies was held.

During the exchange event at the local authority, the participants visited Sendai City with the aim of "understanding the situation of waste reduction and recycling achieved by the combined efforts of the local citizens, project organisers and local administration officers in Sendai City" and paid a courtesy call on the Mayor. They also attended lectures on waste reduction and recycling, as well as policies for foreigners. In addition, study visits to some recycling facilities were also organised.

During the concluding exchange session, comments such as "This seminar has given me a better understanding about local administration system in Japan, as well as the relationship between the central government and the local governments" were shared by many participants, displaying high appraisal for this seminar.

Other comments include:

- ▶ It may not be easy due to cultural differences but we would like to adopt the Japanese methods someday. It has been a very fruitful seminar. (Participant from Malaysia)
- ▶ A perfect seminar. I am from the Department of Public Hygiene and Environment, and much information gained from this seminar has been of great reference. I hope to implement what I've learnt. (Participant from Thailand)
- ▶ I have learnt much from the experiences of Japan, as well as opinions exchanged with my fellow participants. (Participant from Cambodia)



• Visiting waste disposal site in Tokyo



• Courtesy call on Mayor of Sendai City

Seminar itinerary

| Date | Details | Accommodation |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|
| 26 July (Sun) | Arrival in Japan | Tokyo |
| 27 July (Mon) | Tour of Government Facilities in Tokyo (Metropolitan Police Department, Waste Disposal Site, World Bank Tokyo Office) | Tokyo |
| 28 July (Tue) | Tokyo Seminar (Presentation of CLAIR activities, Courtesy Call on Chairman of CLAIR's Board of Directors, Introduction of Japanese Local Government System and Environmental Administration, Welcome Reception) | Tokyo |
| 29 July (Wed) | Travel to Japanese Host Local Government Exchange Events in Local Authority (Study Visits, Courtesy Call on Mayor, Introduction of Sendai City) | Sendai City (Miyagi Pref.) |
| 30 July (Thu) | Exchange Events in Local Authority (Lecture on waste reduction and recycling in Sendai City, Study visit to recycling facilities, Welcome dinner) | Sendai City (Miyagi Pref.) |
| 31 July (Fri) | Exchange Events in Local Authority (Study visits, Concluding exchange session) | Sendai City (Miyagi Pref.) |
| 1 August (Sat) | Return to Tokyo | Tokyo |
| 2 August (Sun) | Departure from Japan | |

Local Government Officials Training Program (LGOTP) in Japan

With the aim of further enhancing international cooperation efforts implemented by local governments in Japan, CLAIR has initiated the Local Government Officials Training Program (LGOTP) since 1996.

The program serves 2 main purposes. Firstly, to invite trainees from foreign local governments for training at Japanese local governments in order to transfer knowledge and technical skills that can be utilized to improve the trainees' respective local governments. Secondly, under this program, trainees will cooperate with activities for internationalization implemented by their host local governments in Japan. Trainees will also function to bridge communication and exchange activities between their respective local governments and the Japanese local governments upon return to their home countries.

The LGOTP will be started with a 2-day orientation in Tokyo, whereby trainees will be briefed on matters pertaining to their life in Japan, sit for a proficiency test of the Japanese Language, and participate in a study tour of Tokyo etc. Right after the orientation in Tokyo, trainees will then have an intensive Japanese Language course for 1 month at The Japan Intercultural Academy of Municipalities (JIAM), which is a training center located in Shiga Prefecture for capacity building of local government personnel.

After the intensive Japanese Language course at JIAM, trainees will depart for their host local governments in Japan, whereby they will be trained in their respective fields of specialization under a training schedule specified by the host local governments. Finally, the trainees will gather again in October for a 2-day conference in Tokyo, to share with each other on what they have learnt from the specialized trainings.

For the past 13 years since the program started, a total of 870 trainees from 34 countries and areas have participated. Training programs have been provided in a wide variety of fields, including general administration, education, environmental conservation and agriculture.



• Trainees from Kota Bahru, Malaysia learning agricultural techniques in Kasaoka City, Okayama Prefecture (picture taken while they were harvesting peaches)

A typical itinerary of the LGOTP is shown as follows:

| Date | Program |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| End of May | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrival in Japan • Tokyo Orientation (2 days) |
| End of May~ End of June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive Japanese Language course at JIAM (1 month) |
| End of June~ | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized training at host local government |
| Middle October | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference (2 days) |
| Middle December~ End of December | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departure for home country |

For fiscal year 2009, 8 trainees from 5 ASEAN countries participated in the program: 3 trainees from Malaysia (agriculture), 2 trainees from the Philippines (environmental conservation and agriculture), 1 trainee from Indonesia (general administration), 1 trainee from Thailand (environmental conservation), and 1 trainee from Vietnam (urban planning).

The followings are some feedbacks from trainees who have participated in the LGOTP:

- ▶ "I have participated in the LGOTP so as to acquire new knowledge on the strategies and techniques of cattle and poultry production. Through the training, I was able to learn the embryo transfer production technique, in addition to the important diseases affecting cattle and poultry."
Mr. Gerry Petrola Banwagen, Republic of the Philippines
- ▶ "With the aim of leveraging human resource development in my local government, I have participated in the LGOTP. In addition to new perspectives on personnel recruitment and evaluation systems, I was also able to gain knowledge on public service centre, solid waste and sewerage management systems."
Mr. Ferdhie Ardiansyah, Surabaya City Government, Republic of Indonesia.
- ▶ "I was able to learn the Japanese Language and its culture during my training at JIAM. In addition, I have got to know many friends coming from various countries during my stay at JIAM. I was able to further enhance my understanding of Japanese history through study tours to historical temples, experience the natural beauty of Japan through visits to famous lakes, and experience the unique Japanese culture through pottery-making and flower arrangement."
Mr. Dali Setiadi, Republic of Indonesia.

CLAIR sincerely hopes that local governments in the ASEAN region as well as India could fully utilize the LGOTP for not only administrative improvement, but also for exchange with local governments in Japan. Please contact CLAIR Singapore for further details.

"asianbeat" – A Multilingual Pop Culture Website from Fukuoka



<http://asianbeat.com/>

Pop culture knows no boundaries!

Anime, manga and video games are just some of the genres of pop culture highly in vogue among youths all over the world today. Such youth culture, which also includes pop music, fashion, food, film, theatre and art, is rapidly developing as a common culture of Asia and is nurturing the sensibilities and values of youths who will become the pillars of the next generation.

Pioneering initiative

In the course of promoting interaction among the next generation of Asians, Fukuoka prefecture has rendered the fostering of youth cultural exchange an important measure and has been managing a multilingual website "asianbeat" (<http://asianbeat.com>) since 2005 to broadcast youth culture and information from Japan and Asia. The aim is to promote mutual understanding among Asia's youths through the exchange of information over the internet and the organization of various events.

Fukuoka's history and character conducive for nurturing youth culture

Fukuoka has probably its history and character to attribute to its being a pioneer in promoting youth cultural exchange. The prefecture has had a long history of being the contact point of exchange with the Asian Continent. It has recently concluded friendship agreements with Bangkok, Delhi and Hanoi in addition to existing tie-ups with South Korea and China, and is actively conducting various economic, cultural and youth exchanges.

Moreover, looking at the numerous pop artists (Ayumi Hamazaki, MISIA, Ringo Shiina etc.) and manga artists (Reiji Matsumoto, Moto Hagio etc.) that have emerged from Fukuoka, the prefecture indeed has the qualities to accommodate and nurture youths with high aspirations.

About the multilingual website "asianbeat"

The "asianbeat" website relays youth culture and information from Japan and Asia, with a mix of local Fukuoka news for all youths of Asia. Besides Japanese and English, the website can also be viewed in Chinese (simplified and traditional) as well as in Thai.

Furthermore, an online shopping site (<http://shop.asianbeat.com>) was launched in April 2009 with a wide range of products in fashion, figures, accessories and illustrations related to youth culture. Original goods jointly produced by companies and artists using locally made materials are also available. The website has received tremendous response, for example, for its sale of popular bags as orders also came in from overseas and all the bags were snapped up within 1 hour.

Tying up real-life events with "asianbeat" website

Besides the virtual space, it is also essential to further live up exchange activities in reality through project collaborations with various events. For instance, events were held in Bangkok in September 2009 and February 2010.

Events in Bangkok

During the event in September 2009, as the preliminary round of a fashion contest, a photo shoot was conducted for the contestants. The photos taken were posted on "asianbeat" website, and readers could vote for their favorite model. The top 30 most popular models would go on to participate in the final contest held in February, from which the winner and first runner-up will then be invited to take part in the grand fashion show entitled the "Fukuoka Asia Collection" to be held in Fukuoka in March.

For the February event, an "Asianbeat Cosplay Ambassador" was sent from Fukuoka, and activities included an anime song performance as well as exchange with the local Thai cosplayers. The "Asianbeat Cosplay Ambassador" was also chosen by popularity votes on "asianbeat" website.

Results of the events

With such project collaborations between real-life events and the website, awareness is being raised for the website, contributing to more frequent access to the websites in foreign languages. The promotional event in Bangkok has also been scheduled for autumn 2010, therefore it is hoped that the increased level of awareness for the "asianbeat" website will become a driving factor to promote further exchange of youth culture between Japan and Thailand.

Future outlook

By using these means of disseminating information about pop culture, it is hoped that more "Asian Youths" will become fans of Fukuoka and Japan by learning about Fukuoka's and Japan's youth culture. Similarly, "Fukuoka and Japanese Youths" will learn to understand and appreciate Asia better when they learn more about Asian youth culture.

Through "asianbeat", it is hoped that the foundations will have been laid for youths of the next generation to promote mutual exchange, establish understanding with one another and fly high in the future.



• Contestants of the "Anime Dance Award in Thailand" and Fukuoka Cosplay Ambassador at the Comic Party held in Bangkok on 20-21 Feb. 2010

About CLAIR

CLAIR is a joint organisation founded in 1988 by 47 prefectures and 12 major cities in Japan in order to assist Japanese local authorities with the implementation of their international exchange policies. With its headquarters in Tokyo, CLAIR has seven overseas offices in New York, London, Paris, Singapore, Seoul, Sydney, and Beijing.

CLAIR SINGAPORE office was set up in April 1990. It supports and promotes international activities and friendly relations between local authorities in Japan and their counterparts in Singapore and the ASEAN countries as well as India.

For further information on our activities of Japanese Local Authorities, please contact CLAIR Singapore office.

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