

Activity Report

Exit-Voice Tradeoff in Ueda: Empowering Machizukuri from Career Perspectives

For this Special Research Project, the Shinohara seminar stayed in Ueda City from 9/4 to 9/8 to listen to the voice of citizens amidst population decline. We aimed to conduct interviews to thoroughly understand the local situation and analyze ways to deal with citizens' dissatisfaction. During these 5 days, we created and followed a comprehensive itinerary to yield the best outcomes.

Day 1

On the first day of the field trip, we visited the city hall and conducted 3 interviews to get a grasp of the local administration and obtain available data to assess the current situation of population decline, community engagement, and career prospects for young citizens in Ueda City. The first interview was with the School City Promotion Section of the city hall, which shared the latest information on education provided to local students, as well as the city's plan for improving education in the future. We then carried out the second interview with the Human Rights and Diversity Section, in which we were updated on the support that the city offers to women and non-Japanese workers. The last interview of the day was done with the help of the city officers of the Citizen Participation and Collaboration Promotion Section, who gave us an insight into Ueda City's efforts to increase community engagement.

Timeline	
9/4	Interview with Schooling Promotion Section
	Interview with Human Rights & Diversity Section
	Interview with Citizen Participation Promotion Section
9/5	Interview with Regional Employment Promotion Section
	Interview with Shinshu Ham
9/6	Interview with Ueda Chikuma High School and sending out questionnaires
	Interview with Multicultural Coexistence Promotion Association
9/7	Interview with Ueda High School and send out questionnaires
	Visit Machi-Camp and interview the coordinator
	Interview with 3 leaders at Seed Japan
9/8	Visit historic sites and paddy fields in Sanada area

Day 2

On the second day of the field trip, we visited the Regional Employment Promotion Section in the morning. During this 1 hour, we listened to the regional employment status, labor shortage, as well as career prospects for young people from the view of city officers. In the afternoon, we dropped by Shinshu Ham, one of the biggest livestock factories in the region, to look into their way of attracting and supporting foreign labor.



Day 3

On the third day, we drove to Ueda Chikuma High School in the afternoon to distribute questionnaires to students and interview teachers there. During this interview, the teachers shared their information on the local high school education and career prospects of students after high school graduation. After that, we went to the Multicultural Coexistence Promotion Association of Ueda City next to the city hall. We were able to learn about the local activities organized by this association to connect local and non-Japanese residents and the obstacles that prevent them from further developing their activities.



Day 4

On the fourth day we had 3 interviews scheduled. We started by interviewing a teacher at Ueda High School, one of the most prestigious local high schools. Most of their students choose to continue studying after graduation, which is a huge difference from Ueda Chikuma High School. While interviewing the teachers, we found out that the students here have very different backgrounds, leading to different future plans. Currently, we are still waiting for the questionnaires distributed to the students. We then continued to interview local officials who put effort into community construction. We talked to the staff of Machi-Cam, the shared space that aims to bring the local residents and university students in the Ueda area together. We also learned about the activities and seminars hosted there and got to witness a meeting between a local designer and undergraduates about a culture project they were going to collaborate on. Our last interview of the day was with Seed Japan, an organization that provides support for workers planning to relocate to Ueda City and its surrounding areas. Here, they guided us through the services they provided, the local labor shortage, and how they were trying to attract more workers from other prefectures.

Day 5

On the last day, we decided to explore surrounding areas. We got the inspiration from the case study of Shinshu ham. By incorporating historical tourism into the internship program, many Vietnamese workers decided to stay in Ueda city. Therefore, we decided to visit the cultural heritages and paddy fields in Sanada area. During the trip, we also got to talk with the local residents who were selling their harvest in farmers' markets.

Conclusion

After this 5-day trip, we successfully conducted qualitative interviews with local businesses, teachers, city officers, and foreign workers, as well as a quantitative survey with high school students in Ueda City. We also carefully identified career issues with the youth as the key to overcoming the city's population decline. These descriptive data gained from the trip will be used to make recommendations to Ueda city and create our proposal in the Public Policy Forum in November 2023.