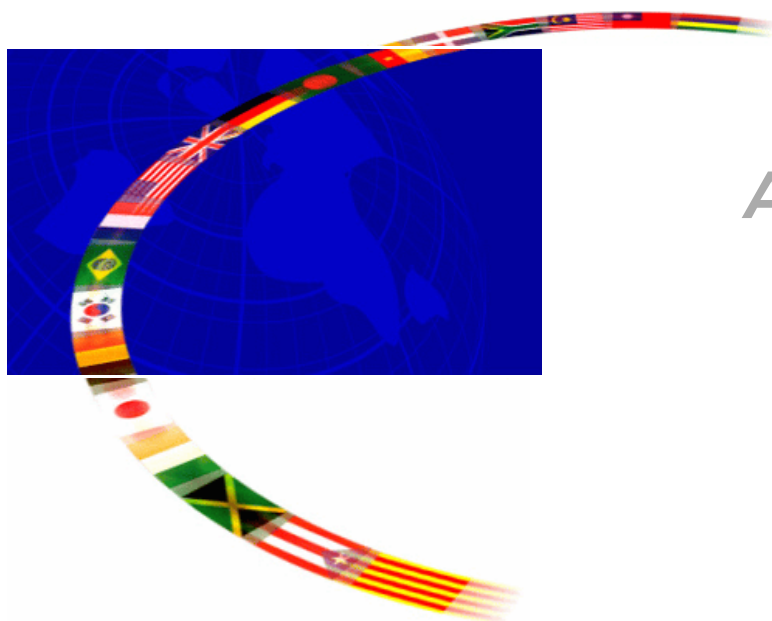




Junior Chamber International
Worldwide Federation of Young Leaders and Entrepreneurs



Awards Entry

2014 Asia-pacific Conference
OH! MY TOWN ACADEMY
JCI JAPAN
Best Local Personal Skill Development Program



Junior Chamber International
Worldwide Federation of Young Leaders and Entrepreneurs

Entry Information

Award Program:

Category:

NOM Information

National Organization:

National President:



Kazuya Suzuki

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LOM Information

Local Organization:

President:

President Email: yfc-saito3900@rhythm.ocn.ne.jp

Basic Information

Duration : From April 26, 2013 to December 7, 2013

Staff : 47 people

Sponsors : Yamagata Prefecture; Yamagata City

Budget : \$7571 SEVEN THOUSAND

Profit / Loss : 0

In which UN MDG best fit (if apply) : ?:

Who is benefited ? : All the citizens of Yamagata City and Yamagata Prefecture (in a broad sense—they benefit by the development of leaders). 1,160,000 citizens of Yamagata Prefecture and 254,000 citizens of Yamagata City—especially, those who care about Yamagata and wan

Objective : To connect potential community leaders who live in Yamagata and create positive change in them to become citizens who will transform their city. TO DEVELOP LOCAL LEADERS IN YAMAGATA WHO EAGER TO CHANGE OUR COMMUNITY INTO A BETTER PLACE AND TO LET THEM CREATE POSITIVE CHANGES.

To develop local leaders in Yamagata who want to make their community a better place, and who will bring positive changes in their community.

To develop local leaders in Yamagata who want to make their community a better place through projects that broadly target private citizens.

For such leaders to bring positive change in their community.

Overview : Opening of “Oh! My Town Academy”

Opened “Oh! My Town Academy” and invited participants for the purpose of developing leaders through a course of seven classes.

1. In order to invite participants, we widely advertised the project and held an explanation meeting for those interested in participating. 147 people participated.
2. Of the seven classes, the first three were lectures by invited experts. Since this was a valuable opportunity for participants to learn the foundations of community vitalization, we selected experts who are famous in Japan for their work in community vitalization and community formation. We were able to offer participants valuable lectures, which are seldom given in regional cities such as Yamagata.
3. In the remaining 4 classes, the participants identified issues in their own communities and worked to find solutions.

■ Overview of classes

1st class: Lecture

Basic concepts of community development and successful case-studies were introduced. The lecturer was a famous landscape designer, community designer and university lecturer.

2nd class: Lecture

Lecturer introduced case studies of community vitalization.

Although a public servant, the lecturer has achieved numerous successes in vitalizing his community and has been featured in numerous media.

3rd class: Lecture

Lecturer was a professor at the Tohoku University of Art and Design. Orientation for the subsequent classes was given.

4th class: Participants brainstormed to find issues in their community. Participants divided into groups of a few members each and brainstormed issues in their community. The issues identified by the groups were categorized into six categories.

○Six categories that emerged

1. Issues in agriculture, industry and commerce.
2. Issues in connecting people in Yamagata
3. Cultural issues in Yamagata
4. Career/educational issues
5. Tourism issues
6. International issues

5th class: Dig deeper into the six categories

Each group was assigned an issue in the community, which was discussed. The discussion covered why the issue emerged and how to solve it.

6th class: Participants divided into six groups and considered solutions. Like the 5th class, solutions to the issues were discussed.

7th class: Preparation for public presentation. Solutions were discussed and preparations were made for the public presentation.

4. A public presentation, called "Meeting of One Hundred," was held as the forum for the six groups to give their presentations. Presentations were given on the issues in the community, which the participants had been working on in class, and solutions there too. Each graduate of the Academy was given a diploma.
5. After completion of the course, each team launched an independent project.

Results : Citizens who want community vitalization assembled from the prefecture and city.

- Potential community leaders were assembled.
- People working in their communities were connected.

Many of the participants were highly driven to think about the community and what can be done for the community. The classes enabled these people to gain a common understanding by sharing the same issue. As a result, their vectors, which were scattered at the beginning, began to point in the same direction. The attendance rate of each class was very high, at 90% or more. The passion of the participants created positive energy, and a desire grew in them to take action with a project to resolve the issue. Thus, each participant was positively changed.

- Something happened that even we, who started the project, couldn't predict.

The participants announced that some of the groups were independently launching and operating a project for the community after finishing "Oh! My Town Academy". This is evidence that the participants became self-aware as community leaders through the Academy.

The following are the projects they launched.

- Activities of the teams after completion of the course.
- Three of the six teams are undertaking independent activities.

The work at "Oh! My Town Academy" was recognized by the administration of Yamagata Prefecture. The Career Development team

implemented an event called “Story Forum” in January 2014 at a camp for new high school student-leaders (students who will be the next student council presidents etc.) from all over Yamagata Prefecture, which is sponsored by Yamagata Prefecture every year. 100 high school students residing in the prefecture heard stories from their seniors who are working in Yamagata about how wonderful it is to work in Yamagata. Based on the survey result, 80 % of the high school students who participated wanted to work in Yamagata. This very high result shows the positive change that occurred.

The People of Yamagata team held an event in January 2014 called “Room for Discussion.

“Room for Discussion” was an event for cross-generational discussion on feelings and ideas about the community with an invited guest. “Oh! My Town Academy” membership increased. The feeling of wanting more people to join “Oh! My Town Academy” led to this voluntary membership expansion effort. 42 people attended. 10 of the 42 expressed a desire to become new members and work with the existing members to create a vital city. Thus, the participants from the team were able to meet new, potential community leaders who want to take action for community vitalization.

Plans to implement “Certify Master of Yamagata” in May.

“Certify Master of Yamagata” is planned for May 11, 2014. The objective is to have the people of Yamagata deepen their own understanding of Yamagata so they can properly communicate the history, industry, culture, tourism sites, cuisine, etc. to tourists. Sponsors include JCI Yamagata, Yamagata Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Yamagata City and Yamagata City Tourism Association.

There has never been an event like this. The fact that participants of the course conceived and will produce such an event on their own means that community leaders, indeed, are being developed.

- Foundations of community vitalization were learned from lecturers, heightening self-awareness as a community leader.
- Conducted survey; about 90% of enrollees answered it was good to meet people with heightened awareness.
- Conducted survey; about 77% of enrollees answered they were very happy they participated.
- Conducted survey; about 83% of enrollees answered their awareness for vitalizing the city was heightened.

Actions Taken : April 26, 2013 (Fri): Explanation meeting to solicit participants. 105 people attended.
Presented an overview of “Oh! My Town Academy”, which will be offered.

May 25, 2013 (Sat): 1st class. 207 people participated (open to the public; included 52 enrollees).
Lecture given by guest speaker; learned foundations of community development.

May 31, 2013 (Fri): 2nd class. 102 people participated (open to the public; included 59 enrollees).
Lecture given by guest speaker; studied past cases of successful community vitalization efforts.

July 5, 2013 (Fri): 3rd class. 49 people participated (all enrollees).
Lecture given by guest speaker; orientation for subsequent classes.

August 30, 2013 (Fri): 4th class. 36 people participated (all enrollees).
With the lecturer as leader, all participants brainstormed issues in the community.

September 13, 2013 (Fri): 5th class. 30 people participated (all enrollees). With the lecturer as leader, six issues were investigated further.

October 11, 2013 (Fri): 6th class. 29 people participated (all enrollees). With the lecturer as leader, solutions to the issue were considered.

- Divided into six groups, created teams and a project was launched by each team.

1. Agriculture/Industry/Commerce team

Realized there is an issue of insufficient successors, advertising and production in agriculture, industry and commerce in the area. As a solution, proposed proactively creating opportunities for public relations through various events, based on the thinking that the first step is to build connections.

2. People of Yamagata team

Realized there was no “place of connection”—an “open forum” where anyone can participate anytime—for people who can make Yamagata an interesting place. The team presented ways for people to connect, such as setting up a monthly meeting which anyone can attend, creating an exchange program with “experts” identified by the team, and creating a visual database of talent, etc.

3. Culture team

Realized Yamagata is not an attractive town to young people. Data shows the probability of a high school student remaining in Yamagata upon graduation ranks 38th among the 47 prefectures. Thus, stopping the outflow of the young population was considered the top priority. The team proposed creating a positive community that is specialized for youth.

4. International Exchange team

Data shows that only 0.5% of the population are foreign residents, which is 32nd among the 47 prefectures. The number of foreign tourists is approximately 48,000 in a year—half of what it was before the Great Earthquake of '11. The team realized from this data that there is the issue of sparse foreign residents and overseas tourists in Yamagata. Presented countermeasures, such as increasing the number of people who want to participate in international exchanges, creating professionals who communicate the attractiveness of Yamagata to foreign visitors in their respective language, and hosting periodic socials with foreign residents to learn the perspectives from abroad.

5. Career/Education team

The team realized there is the issue wherein the number of young people taking jobs in Yamagata is low. Proposed a project targeting high school students who are about to search for jobs. Attractive leaders who work in Yamagata will talk about their experience and benefits of working locally. Thus, an opportunity is provided for the students to think about their own future.

6. Tourism team

Beginning in May 2014, “Tohoku Rokkonsai”, which is an earthquake recovery memorial event, JCI ASPCAC Yamagata, and Yamagata Destination Campaign, which is a tourism campaign to attract large numbers of tourists to Yamagata Prefecture, will all be happening in Yamagata. The team realized this is a unique opportunity in which crowds will gather—it is a significant tourism opportunity for Yamagata. Thus, it is the best chance to create fans of Yamagata.

To take advantage of this opportunity, a project was started for Yamagata residents to learn about Yamagata in order to promote the attractiveness of their community.

October 11, 2013 (Fri): 7th class. 30 people participated (all enrollees).

With the lecturer as leader, solutions were reviewed and preparations were made for the presentations at the public presentation.

December 7, 2013 (Sat): Public presentation (Meeting of One Hundred). 103 people participated (open to the public; included 34 enrollees).

The public presentation was named "Meeting of One Hundred."

Six teams presented projects addressing their respective issues.

Recommendations : Potential community leaders were able to connect with each other. As a result, we developed leaders who will lead the way to solving the issues of the community and make the community a better place. Furthermore, a community was created in which such people can work.

- A positive community was established where anybody who wants to vitalize the community can easily participate. Thus, the hurdle of the people in the community toward taking the first step was lowered.

- As discussed in the "Results" box, projects started by the Academy enrollees themselves have already begun, leading to community vitalization from a different perspective than in the past.

Award Category criteria

1

Objectives, Planning, Finance and Execution

What were the objectives of this program? To develop local leaders in Yamagata who want to make their community a better place through projects that broadly target private citizens. For those leaders to bring about positive changes in their community.

How does this program align to the JCI Plan of Action? This project focuses on the individual social responsibility of private citizens in a community. Furthermore, this program has created many solution providers.

This program provided the opportunity for private citizens to enhance their personal growth.

Private citizens of the community learned to think on their own and act for a positive change in the community by going through this training program.

This program expanded the individual social responsibility of empowered citizens, which contributes to the growth of community.

Was the budget an effective guide for the financial management of the project? The breakdown of the budget for this program is as follows.
Lecturer fee (three people): 74%
Venue cost: 14%
Other: 12%

The expenditure to implement this program followed the budget.
We used public facilities, offered to citizens for free or at a very low cost, as venues for the program.

How does this project advance the JCI Mission and Vision? <The JCI Mission>
This program promoted the JCI mission in the following ways.
1. To provide an attractive introduction that enables citizens interested in the program to make the decision to enroll.
2. To empower participants through team activities. Through the above, our program empowered private citizens of the community to create positive change.

<The JCI Vision>
This program promoted the JCI vision in the following ways.
1. Bring participants to a realization that they can create their own story/future for the community after the completion of the program by using the skills learned in the program.
2. Throughout the duration of the program, participants learn about the skills that can be acquired in the program.
Through the above, our program turned the private citizens of the community into active citizens.



Award Category criteria

2

Membership Participation

By number, how many members were involved in this program? **9 MEMBERS**

By percentage, how many members of the Local Organization were involved in this program? **25%**

Describe the main roles of the participating members in this program.

- Decide on program content (5 members)
- Select lecturers (3 members)
- Set the issues for each session (3 members)
- Measure progress and results for each session (2 members)
- Select session venue (2 members)
- Manage the budget (1 member)



Award Category criteria

3

Skills Developed

What skills were developed in this program?

1. Skill to analyze issues in the community and specify the task.
2. Skill to build and manage a team.
3. Skill to create specific solutions as a solution provider.
4. Skill to give presentations to private citizens on the issue in the community and the solution.
5. Skill to involve private citizens of the community to solve the issue.

How were these skills developed?
Describe the methods and activities used.

46 people in the community became active citizens through this project.
The actions of the active citizens produced the following impact on the community after the project finished.

<Career/Education team>

The work at “Oh! My Town Academy” was recognized by the administration of Yamagata Prefecture.

The active citizens brought about positive change in 100 high school students.

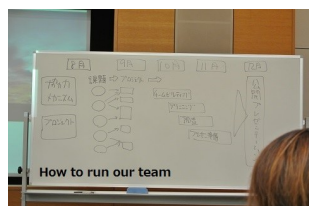
The active citizens implemented a program for communicating the joy of work in a new-leader meeting of high school students, sponsored by Yamagata Prefecture.

100 new high school student-leaders attended. Based on the survey result, 80 % of the high school students who participated wanted to work in Yamagata, which is a very high number.

<Tourism team>

The active citizens developed a project sponsored by Yamagata City, Yamagata Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Yamagata City Tourism Association.

A program to get the people of Yamagata to deepen their own understanding of Yamagata in order to properly communicate the history, industry, culture, tourism sites, cuisine, etc. to tourists is scheduled for May 11, 2014.





Award Category criteria

4

Impact on Participants

What was the intended impact on the participants?

This program was intended to impact participants in the following ways.

- 1. Teach participants the skill to positively change the community.
- 2. Cause the participants to become leaders and to initiate action for their own communities.

Describe the actual impact on the participants.

Participants took initiative on the following projects after the program was finished so as to bring about positive change to the community and its citizens.

- 1. The Career Development team implemented a project called "Story Forum" in January 2014 at a camp for new high school student-leaders from all over Yamagata Prefecture, which is sponsored by Yamagata Prefecture every year.
- 2. To positively change the community, a meeting was held for cross-generational discussion with an invited guest. 42 new members were added by voluntary membership expansion activities intended to increase partners with whom to change the community.
- 3. A project sponsored by Yamagata City, Yamagata Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Yamagata City Tourism Association was developed.

A program to get 300 people of Yamagata to acquire correct information about their community and skills to communicate the same is scheduled for May 11, 2014.

From the above results, this program produced the impact of developing community leaders and equipping them with skills to take action.





Award Category criteria

5

Long-term Impact of the Program

What is the expected long-term impact of this project? In the long term, our program is expected to continue to increase the number of active citizens, and many people in the community will continue to act toward positive changes in the community.

This is because:

1. Participants of the program will develop skills as citizens who can take initiative for the community.
2. People who become active citizens will take action for the community.
3. Other private citizens will be impacted by the actions in No. 2.
4. Private citizens impacted in No. 3 will become active citizens.

What changes would you make to improve the results of this project? “JCI members must create A) a way for sharing many social issues, and B) a way to create programs to develop skills to solve those issues.”

There is the possibility that issues in the community can be solved by acting in partnership with other areas.

