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SciREX Summer Camp Report

Miyu Ishiguro Legal Policy Division, 1st Year

I participated in the SciREX Summer Camp held over three days from August 31 to September 2. This year's course took place on Awaji Island, with the topic being societies with a falling population. It involved working in groups to develop likely and ideal scenarios for 30 years in the future, and producing policy proposals for achieving the ideal outcome.

●Up to the night before departure

Before arriving in person, we introduced ourselves to our groups and undertook preliminary exercises. My group was made up of people from a variety of disciplines, such as agriculture and philosophy of science, and with diverse backgrounds, ranging from people with employment experience to someone who already had a master's degree and aimed to receive another. While I looked forward to the cross-cultural attraction of having people from diverse backgrounds, I did wonder whether we would be able to agree on a joint proposal. Given the difficulty of conducting much of a conversation by e-mail, we approached the start date without being fully prepared and I joined the course with some doubts still in my mind.

●At the course

The summer camp primarily involved group work. In my group, we first had to make up for our lack of preparation, but once we got to meet each other face-to-face, our discussion proceeded smoothly. The group leader kept careful track of time and we all avoided focusing too much on our own specialties. As part of their preliminary preparations, one of our group, an expert in public health, had produced a concept diagram looking 30 years ahead from the perspective of their own field. At the camp, though, his attitude was to contribute his own knowledge when



dealing with medical or public health issues but to pay careful attention to what everyone else had to say when it came to fields outside their area of expertise, he declared. Having talked this over early on, our discussions proceeded with everyone respecting each other's differences. What impressed me here was that, whereas we are in the habit of looking at things like society and policy from within the frame of our own specialties, this was a chance to gain insights into how these things look from different perspectives. Looking at legal matters from the perspective of someone who develops rockets provided a view of the law unlike what I get in my usual studies.

●After the summer camp

Having received some stern feedback from the teachers at the group presentation, the summer camp left me with an awareness of how much I still have to learn. In regard to putting policy into practice, it was pointed out to me that the impressive outcomes I intended would not necessarily eventuate straight away, and while this may seem obvious when written down, it is something you tend to forget when engaged in group work at a summer camp. Nevertheless, while the expression may sound a little clichéd, I found it a valuable experience to be involved in the group work and other activities, and in the cross-cultural exchange that resulted from contact with people I would not normally get to meet, including members of our group with different specialties and academics from other universities.

"Why do you always restrict themselves to their own field?"

I particularly remember this comment being made by one of the teachers I had a chance to speak to. This has prompted me to adopt an attitude of opening myself up to other fields.



Public Symposium

A New Beginning for Healthcare Planning

～ Achieving viability in the optimization of regional healthcare ～

 **Kenichi Hanioka** Project Professor

This symposium was held over two days on October 12 and 13, 2014. Now in its fourth year, the symposium is a public event staged annually by the Health Policy Unit (HPU). This year's event was organized in cooperation with the Regional Health Plan Action Community (RH-PAC), a voluntary organization looking into the best practices for regional healthcare planning. Despite the uninviting weather, with a typhoon imminent, it was attended by about 280 people (160 on day 1, 120 on day 2), including policy makers, patients and residents, healthcare providers, and media. It is also worthy of note that the attendees included 21 healthcare planning administrators from 14 prefectures.

Much attention is currently being directed at regional healthcare planning. A variety of system funding was introduced in August 2013 under the Report of the National Council on Social Security System Reform. The Hospital Bed Function Reporting System was launched to provide the basis for deciding on the reallocation of beds. Each prefecture will in the next fiscal year produce a Regional Health Care Vision that will serve as a blueprint for the restructuring of regional systems for healthcare provision. Guidelines for this are currently under preparation at the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW). There will also be a "consolidated fund for regional healthcare and nursing" (90 billion yen approx.) funded by consumption tax. The establishment of these arrangements has led to growing hopes that healthcare plans, which have traditionally been thought of as "pie in the sky," will now have the viability to reform regional healthcare.

The symposium was divided into three parts, consisting respectively of lectures, an announcement of healthcare planning guidelines by RH-PAC, and a panel discussion.

The first of the lectures, given by Manabu Yoshida, Councilor for healthcare and nursing coordination of MHLW, was entitled "Overview of Strategy for 2025" and presented a "grand design" for a society with a high degree of population aging. Next, Takashi Kitaba, Manager of the Regional Healthcare Planning Section at the Health Policy Bureau of MHLW, gave a presentation entitled "Trends in Regional Healthcare Planning" that described various specific policies. Nikkei Healthcare editor, Yasuko Shoji, then presented "Why Is Regional Health Care Plan Essential Now?" in which she identified matters that deserve attention. The three lectures all made the point that healthcare planning is the key to restructuring the systems for healthcare provision in Japan.

Next, the Regional Healthcare Vision/Regional Healthcare Planning Guidelines (provisional) produced by the RH-PAC were presented in separate parts. These consisted of 16 separate guidelines: three core guidelines (Basic Planning Guidelines, Planning Process Guidelines, and Participant Training Guidelines), two guidelines on specific topics (PDCA Cycle and Indices, and Division of Functions and Coordination), and eleven disease- or activity-specific guidelines (Cancer, Stroke, Acute Myocardial Infarction, Diabetes, Mental Illness, Emergency Medicine, Disaster Medicine, Rural Medicine, Perinatal Medicine, Pediatrics, and



Approximately 280 people attended over the two days despite the threat of an imminent typhoon.

In-home Care). Copies of the roughly 300-page guideline document were circulated.

The aims of the guidelines are to enhance regional planning capabilities and achieve the best regional healthcare system through measures such as: (1) enabling participation in the planning process by people with a diverse range of perspectives, including local patients and residents as well as administrators, (2) incorporating practical know-how and policy proposals that are not able to be included in national guidelines. A questionnaire was sent out to regional governments (with replies received from 36 prefectures) and the situations, opinions, and needs expressed in the responses were considered when preparing the guidelines.

RH-PAC is a group of approximately 100 volunteers with expertise in the subject, including patients and resident representatives, healthcare policy-makers, healthcare providers, and media. A large number of positive responses were received to the question, "Would you participate in a study group on the topic of healthcare planning?", which was included in a questionnaire of attendees at the third public symposium on "Healthcare Planning and National Fee Schedule for Medical Care in 2025" held in September of last year. RH-PAC was subsequently established in April this year. Many of the participants in RH-PAC are from the Health Policy Action Community (H-PAC), a leadership development course for the public conducted by the HPU, and its predecessor, the Health Care and Social Policy Leadership Program (HSP) at the University of Tokyo. RH-PAC has held 17 meetings since April, with 13 working groups having been established to look at specific topics.

The final part of the symposium was the panel discussion on the topic, "Road Map to 2018 – What Can We Do Now?", where panelists representing a broad range of perspectives, including national and regional governments, patients and residents, insurers, healthcare providers, and media, engaged in a lively discussion about how they could work toward a common goal.



The lively panel discussion included engaging with members of the audience.



Human pyramid of colleagues for a farewell video letter to a cram school employee

Student Interview

No. 19

Yuichi Sakurai

Economic Policy Division,
2nd Year

— Tell us about your background that led you to study at GraSPP

It is a long story. I grew up in Adachi-ku. In junior high school I found myself in a disruptive class that left me feeling frustrated that the students around me prevented me from learning even though I had wanted to. What made it worse was that I grew up with only my mother. We were not financially well off, meaning I could not go to a "jyuku" cram school, and therefore the school was the only place I could learn. While I was aware of the problem, I wasn't brave enough to tell the other students to stop. That I was stubborn enough not to be carried along with them was a stroke of luck amid the misfortune.

My high school was just a local city-run school, not one of those that prepares you for further study, so this too was something of a problem. Because the only way to get ahead was through study, I set my heart on getting into university. I wanted to go somewhere where there were lots of people of the same mind. While I had set my sights on the University of Tokyo entrance examination up until my second year at high school, because my high school didn't provide the right preparation. Since I couldn't afford cram school, I changed plan and went instead to do economics at Sophia University.

Knowing how much my mother was struggling, I couldn't ask her to pay for my tuition fees. Instead I got a bursary from Yomiuri newspaper up until the first semester of my third year. While all of the newspapers offered bursaries, I chose Yomiuri because they and Nikkei were the ones offering the largest grant and highest monthly allowance. My territory was the Ueno neighborhood and I would deliver the morning and afternoon editions as far as Yushima. This meant getting up at one-thirty or two in the morning and going to bed at eight or nine in the evening. I would stay up studying to ten or eleven at exam times, but it was very tiring. I once fell off my bike in wet weather and spilt all of the newspapers over the ground. After that my mother paid for my tuition, and I graduated from being a newspaper bursary student. My experience from that time left me with a philosophy of being "keeping faith with myself and with the people who helped me".

These circumstances made it difficult to study as much as I wanted of the fields that interested me during my undergraduate days. This left me with a desire to go on to graduate school and delve more deeply into economics and the ways in which it is used.

— Have you found a job?

I have a job at Benesse Corporation. It was my first choice, so I am absolutely delighted. I feel an affinity for their stance of putting into practice their company motto of achieving "well-being" through education. I want to make a contribution through education so that children from all sorts of backgrounds can have hopes for the future. Given the sort of work I want to do, I expect my initial posting will be a provincial one somewhere outside Tokyo. If the company tells me to, I'm happy to go anywhere, whether it be the backblocks of the mountains or overseas.

(Interview and text by editor)



Barbeque with colleagues at his part-time cram school job

To GraSPP, SIPA, and Beyond

Nana Homma MPP/IP, Class of 2014



It has been almost two months since I graduated from GraSPP and became a working woman once again. Looking back, the two years at GraSPP were indeed a luxury.

I entered GraSPP's Master of Public Policy International Program class of 2014, and for my second year I studied at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA). The two schools have different strengths that make them unique. At SIPA, the mega-school which has 500 students with diverse backgrounds from all over the world, discussion was always stimulating. In contrast, at much cozier GraSPP you can find true friendship. Through working on term-long projects and tough problem sets together, I made some life-time best friends.

However, if you want to pursue something in depth, your school won't be the only place for a learning opportunity. One thing I learned from my two years was to keep looking outside, while getting the most out of the current environment. For instance, I studied at Komaba Campus among engineering students in addition to economics and management classes at GraSPP's Hongo Campus. Similarly, I chose to study abroad at SIPA in order to further concentrate on my research topic from the beginning: the harmonization between development and disaster risk management policies and mainstreaming disaster management in developing countries. At SIPA, an important part of my study involved interviews and fieldworks outside of the classroom. I have to admit that I struggled with the language barrier, but the first-hand accounts and local interactions were definitely something I would not have been able to obtain from lectures and textbooks.

I stated earlier that the two years were a luxury. To put it another way, as a student you are free to take any kind of approach towards your topic. I suggest all of you to continuously seek for learning opportunities, not just at GraSPP, but also elsewhere at the University of Tokyo, and beyond.

Currently, I am working at the international division of a Japanese company which specializes in geospatial information. Our work assists developing countries' development, urban planning and disaster risk management; in basic terms, an accurate understanding of their lands. Though I face many new (and difficult) things to learn every day, so far it has been very rewarding and exciting.

Topical News

At an Asia tournament for impromptu English debating in which 76 teams from around Asia participated in early October, GraSPP students Akira Kato and Kazushige Yoshimaru became the first Japanese to make it into the top 16. The impromptu English debates are a lively form of competition around the world, with contestants being given a proposition and 15 minutes to prepare a case in English that will impress the independent judges. The contestants are automatically assigned to argue either for or against the proposition, which they need to consider and argue from a variety of perspectives. Propositions at the tournament covered such issues as "competitors at international sporting events making political or religious statements," "the Hong Kong student demonstrations," and "whether Fatah should cooperate with the USA and Israel."

Akira Kato and Kazushige Yoshimaru
International Public Policy Division, 2nd Year



Editor's Postscript

Yuichi Sakurai, the subject of this newsletter's student interview, is a "kugakusei (self-supporting student)," a term that is in danger of dying out. Listening to his story about how he used his struggle to overcome adverse circumstances as springboard to study at GraSPP gave me pause to wonder about where the difference lies between those people who overcome adversity and those who do not. While the individual's motivation is likely part of it, I believe that people and other background factors can also act as the source of that motivation. There is an expression, "nature versus nurture"; it is nurture that we can change. (Editor)

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