

JSPS Fellow Experience

Type of fellowship undertaken: JSPS Summer Program 2016

Research Title: The role of policy entrepreneurs at the local and national levels in immigration policy-making in Japan

Dates: June 22nd 2016 to August 22nd 2016

Host: Prof. Norio Horie

Host Institution: Centre for Far Eastern Studies (CFES), University of Toyama

Fellow: PhD Student, Szymon Parzniewski, University of Birmingham

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Research

During my recent JSPS Summer Program Fellowship I was hosted by Prof. Norio Horie from the Centre for Far Eastern Studies, University of Toyama. The Fellowship comprised research field trips to potential case study sites and visits to research institutions. The focus was to learn from the Japanese approach and establish personal contacts for building international networks of researchers. My research fieldwork activities included interviews, meetings and discussions with practitioners and policy makers in the field of migration, including visits to city and prefectural level organizations contributing to the wellbeing of foreign residents in Japan. For instance, the Niigata International Association and Miyagi International Association.

I explored the role of policy entrepreneurship in migrants support and foreign residents counselling activities at the local level, including some key areas such as: healthcare, education and disaster prevention. By participating in the International Resident Support and Disaster Prevention Training in Ishikawa, I had an opportunity to experience how foreign resident support in Japan is implemented in practice.

In addition to the research activities directly linked to my project, I also had an opportunity to strengthen the existing research collaborations and build new ones. From July 25-28, 2016 I participated in the Summer School in Border Studies hosted by the Slavic Eurasian Research Centre as part of the Hokkaido Summer Institute. I also had a chance to present my research during research lectures and events at the CFES. These opportunities established research links in Japan that can contribute greatly to my research career.

Life in Japan

Beyond the great environment to conduct research, this program gave me a unique opportunity to partake in a wide range of Japanese cultural activities,



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including among others: ikebana exhibition, Owara summer dance festival, visit to the Gion Matsuri Festival in Kyoto and the Tobiu Art Community. Moreover, I had a chance to experience the Ainu culture of the indigenous people of northern Japan and practice playing the traditional mukkuri musical instrument. I

also participated in events that foster mutual understanding, such as the speech of the German Ambassador to Japan Dr. Hans Carl von Werthern. I have been invited to deliver two lectures at the Toyama Cosmopolitan Association, which gave me a good chance to contribute to the cultural bridging between Japan and European nations.



Toyama University main library

Tips: 1. In Japan most people plan their schedule well in advance. Make sure you have enough time to arrange your meetings and research activities (take into account public and summer holidays). 2. Don't be afraid to explore and get lost. Japanese people are always eager to help and learn about other people and cultures. 3. Every region in Japan has its special local craftsmanship and delicacies. Enjoy as much as you can because Japan is amazing!