

Pursuit of Innovation in Tradition: Promotion of the City of Crafts Kanazawa, UNESCO Creative Cities Network

Kanazawa City



Background

Kanazawa is blessed with an abundant natural environment and a beautiful historic cityscape that remains to this day. With a wide variety of traditional crafts that live and breathe as part of the daily life of its citizens, Kanazawa is without rival, even in Japan, as a city of handicraft. We believe that, in addition to carrying on this unique character of the city, Kanazawa has a responsibility as a “city committed to history” to breathe new life into the future.

From around 2000, the City of Kanazawa has recognised the importance of being a “creative city,” a model city for the 21st century with a unique character that will not be buried by 20th century globalisation. After UNESCO set up the Creative Cities Network in 2004, the city applied for registration as a member of this network in 2008 based on its experience of developing the link between its original culture and industry, aiming to conserve its cultural diversity and contribute to international cooperation, and was designated as a City of Crafts in 2009.

Purpose of Project

- Establishment of the “Kanazawa Creative City Steering Program” with public-private partnerships, based on three goals: linking of culture with business, training of new artisans and international promotion of crafts
- Positioning the promotion of Kanagawa as a Creative City as a priority for the city in terms of its strategic plan



Higashi Chaya District, one of the four Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings in the city

Outline of Project

1. Linking culture with business
 - The Kanazawa Craftwork Business Creation Agency was established in 2011 to support the craft business, including seminars for branding and the expansion of sales channels, the collection and dissemination of information on crafts, and the promotion of new craft businesses.
 - In 2014, the dining gallery Ginza no Kanazawa was established to promote Kanazawa’s local crafts in Tokyo metropolitan area.
2. Cultivation of human resources for cultural development
 - Young craftsmen are sent to UNESCO Creative Cities overseas.
 - Traditional industry trainee scholarships are offered to encourage young professionals with the aim of acquiring more sophisticated craft-related technical skills.

- The Kanazawa Children’s Craft Workshop is held in the areas of design, metalwork, dyeing and ceramics for the purpose of finding and training future artisans.
3. Attracting international attention
- Kanazawa’s own tourism program in which tourists can visit traditional craft workshops, experience traditional craftwork, and visit the city’s main tourist and heritage sites is called Kanazawa Craft Tourism, to support promotion of this type of tourism.
 - Since 2010, the “Triennale of KOGEI in Kanazawa” has been held.
 - To promote innovation by enhancing cross-creative field collaboration, the city implements the mutual creator dispatch project, Crossing Art Residency, with the City of Media Arts, Enghien-les-Bains in France.

Progress and Achievements

- The Kanazawa Creative City Promotion Committee, consisting of craft organisations, business groups, citizen groups and members of the government, was organised to promote the development of a Creative City by unifying public and private efforts.
- This project aims to utilise and enhance the appeal of those parts of the city that escaped major war damage since the construction of a castle town in the Warring States period to cultivate its own unique samurai culture, and has developed, preserved and continued its own traditional culture, scenic cityscape and lifestyle along with its unmatched craftwork.
- The city-based network makes it possible to build relationships directly with other superior creative cities around the world.

Effects of Project

- Hosted the annual meeting of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in 2015. The culture of Kanazawa was promoted to representatives who had

gathered from all the cities of the Network, and further interactions were discussed at the Mayor’s Round Table.

- The Creative City Kanazawa has a higher profile, and the number of overseas visitors to Kenroku-en, one of the major tourist sites, increased 2.9 times from 101,000 in 2009 to 292,000 in 2015.
- The number of visitors to the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, which opened in 2004, was 2.37 million in 2015, ranked 1st of all museums in the country. This museum serves as a hub for cultural development and interaction, connecting the residents with the world.



The 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

Problems and Responses

1. Linking culture with business
Enhancing the promotion capacity of the Kanazawa brand, linking business with art, and enhancing production capacity
2. Cultivation of human resources for cultural development
Succession of techniques, internationalisation of human resources, and reconfirmation of the value of crafts in daily life
3. Attracting international attention
Worldwide promotion and contribution, with practical interaction and cooperation

Outlook

Kanazawa aims to establish its presence as a global City of Culture by becoming a hub for cultural interaction in view of the upcoming 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. To this end, the city has developed its New Strategy for Creating Arts and Culture 2020, with a focus on the importance of cultural activities to the city's sustainable development.



UNESCO Creative City

Reference URL

<http://www4.city.kanazawa.lg.jp/11001/souzoutoshi/english/>

<https://en.unesco.org/creative-cities/>

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Meaning of Terminology/Coined Words Used in this Report

Creative Cities:

Cities vitalizing their communities through the link between creative cultural pursuits and innovative industrial activities.

UNESCO Creative Cities Network:

Set up by UNESCO in 2004 as a framework to protect cultural diversity in situations where native cultures are at risk of being lost due to the progress of globalisation and to fulfill the maximum potential of cultural industries in different parts of the world through strategic cooperation between cities.

Currently, 116 cities from 54 countries of the world have been designated as Creative Cities.