

# Linking to the Future by Enhancing the Sister-City Relationship with the Province of Benguet: Utilising the LGOTP Program

Kochi Prefecture



## Background

In 1974, Kochi Prefecture's Youth Ship visited Benguet Province in the Philippines after a suggestion by a local from Kochi Prefecture who had stayed there as a member of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers. This led to the desire to establish a sister city relationship between Benguet Province and Kochi Prefecture. In July 1975, a signing ceremony was held at Benguet Province Hall, where the Governors from the two local governments officially established a sister city relationship. Since then, Kochi has continued this relationship through various exchange initiatives, such as annually sending a visiting group to Benguet, the welcoming of trainees selected by provincial government officials for LGOTP, and the hosting of trainees from Benguet Province by private organisations for agricultural training.

## Purpose of Project

1. To develop human resources by training participants to acquire the expertise and skills that Kochi Prefecture can offer and promote international cooperation through human resources development.
2. To cultivate a sense of international awareness through exchanges between the trainees and the local people of Kochi Prefecture.

## Outline of Project

1. Number of Trainees and Training Duration: 1 trainee per year for 6 months
2. Schedule:
  - August: Send an enquiry to the Benguet Provincial Government to gauge their interest
  - October: Deadline for the Benguet Provincial Government to reply
  - January: A trainee and a host institution are selected
  - February: The Kochi Prefectural Government official in charge makes an application for "Authorisation of resident eligibility"
  - April: Visa application by the trainee
  - May: Arrival of the trainee in Japan
  - Mid-May to mid- (or late) June: Japanese-language training in Shiga Prefecture
  - Late June (or early July) to early November: Specialised training in facilities in Kochi Prefecture
  - Early November: Return of the trainee to home country
3. History of receiving trainees
  - Public administration, economics, agriculture, environment, city planning, public health, livestock technology and civil engineering
  - Kochi has been receiving one trainee from Benguet for the LGOTP every year since 2005. The areas of training are agriculture, landscape gardening, stock farming and

civil engineering.

## **Progress and Achievements**

### **1. Training in agriculture**

Since 2011, the Kochi Agricultural Research Centre in Nankoku City started receiving a trainee every year.

\*Reference: main research areas of the Centre

- 1) Developing high-quality and stable production methods through the invention and utilisation of new technologies
- 2) Developing methods to reduce the risks that occur in production and logistics sites
- 3) Developing environmentally-friendly production methods and technologies that utilise the recycling of resources



Training at the Kochi Agricultural Research Centre (in 2013)

### **2. Training in landscape gardening**

At present, a plan is underway to construct a sister-city commemorative park in Benguet. The park is to symbolise the friendship between Kochi and Benguet. To maintain and manage the park, Kochi has hosted trainees to develop their skills in landscape gardening since 2016.



Training in the Kochi Prefectural Makino Botanical Gardens (in 2016)

## **Effects of the Project**

Officials from the Benguet Provincial Government who were trained in Kochi and returned home are working to utilise the skills they acquired to further develop their province.

## **Problems and Responses**

### **1. Training in agriculture**

#### **○ Problems**

- 1) The training period is not during the agricultural season in Kochi, so sufficient training cannot be offered.
- 2) The training duration is too short. The training ends before the completion of the entire process.
- 3) Training is hindered by the trainees' lack of Japanese language ability. If such trainees need to receive supplementary lessons in Japanese, the already insufficient duration of the skills training becomes even shorter.

#### **○ Responses**

- 1) While the training duration for LGOTP programs can be up to 12 months long, the time spent in Kochi is only about 5 months. We would like to explore ways to synchronise the training program with the

agricultural season in Kochi.

2) Host institutions are developing training plans to realise short-term but fulfilling training tailored to trainees' wishes.

3) When selecting a trainee, whether the person has learned or has a willingness to learn the Japanese language is taken into consideration.

## 2. Training in landscape gardening

### ○ Problems

1) There are few institutions in the prefecture that can offer training in landscape gardening skills. In FY2016, the training was conducted at the Prefectural Makino Botanical Gardens, but the main content of the training was how to trim trees and plants, rather than the acquisition of skills in landscape gardening, which resulted in a complaint by the trainee.

2) For institutions in Kochi, hosting a trainee for 5 months in addition to their normal work is a burden.

### ○ Responses

1) In FY2016, the prefecture directly asked the Makino Botanical Garden to take in a trainee. In FY2017, however, the prefecture first requested the assistance of the Kochi Prefecture Zouengyo Kyokai (landscape gardening association) to provide training and informed them of the specific contents that the trainee desired. The association then widely recruited institutions that could provide training in line with the wishes of the trainee. Through this process, the prefecture was able to find a host institution that could offer the desired training.

2) In FY2017, three institutions found by the Kochi Prefecture Zouengyo Kyokai took turns giving training, so the burden upon

each institution was reduced. At the same time, the trainee was able to learn a broader range of gardening skills and mingle with more local people.

## Outlook

In the short term, the prefecture will nurture experts who can improve, maintain and manage the park commemorating the sister-city relationship between Kochi Prefecture and Benguet Province, so that the park can eventually be used for leisure not only by the residents of Benguet, but also by people from anywhere in the Philippines.

In the long term, as the LGOTP is aimed at local government officials, the prefecture plans to identify, together with the provincial government, issues pertinent to the province, and support their staff, who serve as the core of the region, in upgrading their skills. When the officials trained in Kochi return home and share the skills they acquired with others in their province, this then will help to develop the region. The prefecture intends to actively utilise the program from now on for this purpose.

## Reference URL

<http://www.pref.kochi.lg.jp/soshiki/141901/h27kokusaikoryu.html>

(Exchanges with Benguet Province in the Philippines, and the project to host trainees for the LGOTP)

## Contact

Department in charge:

International Affairs Division,

Department of Culture, Community and Sports,

Kochi Prefectural Government

Tel: +81-88-823-9605

Email: [141901@ken.pref.kochi.lg.jp](mailto:141901@ken.pref.kochi.lg.jp)