



Council of Local Authorities for International Relations

CLAIR





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The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations

In an increasingly globalized world, Local Governments are faced with issues that extend not only beyond the city limits, but also beyond national borders. International trade, development assistance and technology transfer, people-to-people exchange and mutual cultural understanding are all aspects of Local Government in the modern era. The Council of Local Authorities for International Relations (CLAIR) was formed to assist Local Governments meet these complex international challenges.

This booklet is a brief introduction to our goals, main activities and future challenges.

What is CLAIR?

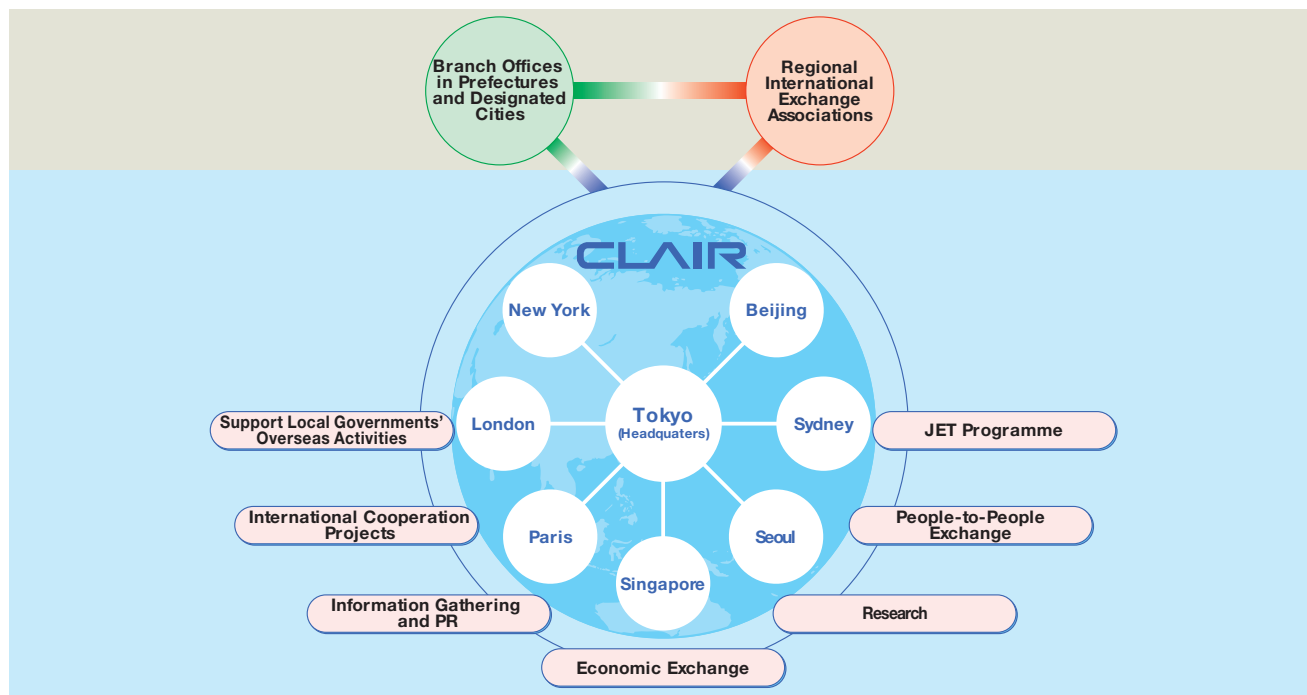
CLAIR was established in 1988 with the cooperation of Japan's Local Governments. Our headquarters are located in Tokyo, with branch offices in Beijing, London, New York, Paris, Seoul, Singapore and Sydney. These offices act as offshore launching pads for Local Governments to become directly involved in international activities.

● CLAIR's services include:

- Supporting sister-city relationships
- Assisting Local Governments become directly involved in foreign aid and development assistance
- Administering the JET Programme
- Helping Local Governments and communities adapt to increasing cultural diversity

- Conducting research into world's best practice in local governance and regional development
- Promoting international understanding of Japan and its fiscal and government structures at a local level
- Providing extensive professional development courses to foster internationally aware Local Government leaders
- Supporting Regional International Exchange Associations (see inset overleaf)

We work closely with the 47 prefectures and 19 designated cities and also in conjunction with Regional International Exchange Associations to provide high quality services in all these areas.



What is a Regional International Exchange Association?

Regional International Exchange Associations have been established across the country to promote mutual understanding between Japan and other nations. They work with Local Government and private groups to run seminars that raise awareness of international issues, advise international students and foreign residents, and stage events to stimulate cross-cultural communication, etc. They are vital partners with CLAIR in grass-roots efforts at establishing a truly internationally-oriented society.

Local Government in Japan

The Japanese system of government can be broken into several categories. The central government deals with issues that affect the whole nation. The nation is also broken into several layers of smaller geographical units that are the responsibility of Local Governments. These units include Prefectures, Designated Cities and Municipalities. CLAIR's role is to provide support to all these Local Governments in their efforts to promote internationalization.

The Background to CLAIR's Formation

Local Governments have increasingly become involved in issues that transcend national borders. In the early post-war years, Local Governments followed the lead of the central government. But over time, their outlook has broadened to encompass a wide array of international issues. With recent moves to devolve power to the regions, this trend is set to continue.

The modern era of Japanese Local Government's direct engagement with foreign nations began with the first sister-city agreement, formed between Nagasaki, and St Paul, Minnesota, USA, in 1955. These two cities based their relationship on a mutual desire for friendship and world peace, only ten years after the end of World War II. This agreement set the tone for the many sister-city relationships formed across Japan in the coming decades.

The next major development was the establishment of the JET Programme in 1987. Aiming to foster greater international understanding of Japan, the programme brings youth from around the world to live and work within local communities across the country. They are engaged by Local Governments to promote mutual understanding between people of different cultures, and often teach foreign languages at local schools. It has been a huge success, and has grown to be one of the largest people-to-people exchange programs in the world.

The need for even greater interaction with the outside world led Local Government to see the value in cooperating to pool resources and share expertise on cross-border issues. With the assistance of The Ministry of Home Affairs (currently The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications), Local Governments formed CLAIR as a collaborative organization to take the lead on matters of mutual concern in the realm of international affairs. CLAIR immediately took responsibility for the

JET Programme, and set up several overseas offices to achieve this goal. It has been at the forefront of local-level internationalization activities ever since.

Future Challenges

CLAIR is evolving to tackle the diverse needs of modern Local Governments. In the recent past, we concentrated upon research and provision of information, promoting friendly relations between Local Governments and cooperating with regions overseas. More recently, economic concerns have moved to the top of Local Governments' list of responsibilities. We therefore are shifting our focus to provide more support in this area.

Japan is also becoming a nation of increased cultural diversity. With over two million people from other countries calling Japan home, it is natural that Local Governments will tailor their programs and policies to reflect the diverse population within their jurisdictions. CLAIR is committed to assisting Local Governments build foreign-resident-friendly communities.

In addition, CLAIR plans to work upon the following areas:

- > Promoting the JET Programme
- > Further improving the activities of our overseas branches
- > Extending our international outreach and exchange activities
- > Building the human capital of Local Government through enhanced professional development programs

The JET Programme

The Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme is one of the world's most successful international exchange programs. Since its establishment in 1987, over 52,000 youth from fifty-four countries have taken the opportunity to live and work in local communities across Japan.

JET Programme participants are engaged in a wide range of activities, including foreign language education, local international exchange activities and sports instruction. By living in their local communities they form close relationships with Japanese people, and come to a deeper understanding of Japanese culture. In this way, JET Programme participants make a valuable contribution to building cross-cultural understanding at a grass-roots level.

JET Programme Positions

JET Programme participants have one of three roles:

● Assistant Language Teacher (ALT)

ALTs are assigned to local boards of education to primarily assist in foreign language education. They mainly work at elementary, junior and senior high schools, and also within the community.



● Coordinator for International Relations (CIR)

CIRs are engaged by Local Governments to assist with grassroots international activities. Typical duties include translating and interpreting, coordinating sister-city



relationships, cultural awareness activities and writing newsletter articles about international issues. CIRs also play a vital role in assisting foreign residents, thereby helping to build a harmonious multicultural society at the local level.

● Sports Exchange Advisor (SEA)

SEAs are engaged by Local Governments to provide sports instruction, and improve cross-cultural understanding through sport.



CLAIR's Role in the JET Programme

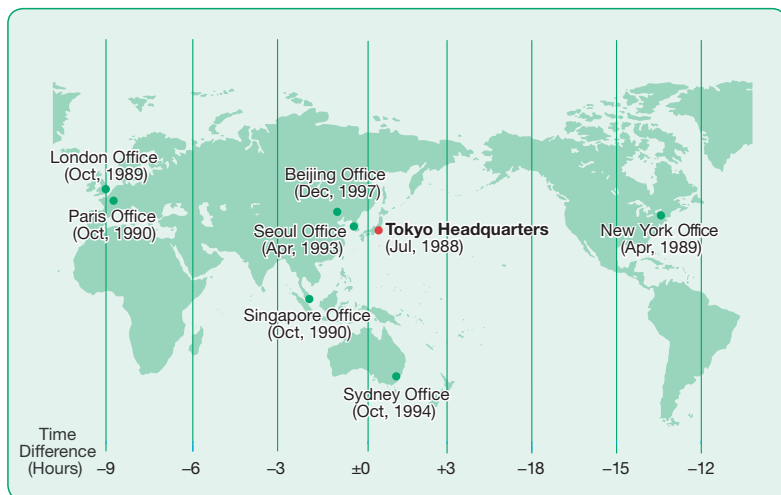
CLAIR cooperates with three ministries to facilitate the smooth running of the JET Programme. Day-to-day administration includes placement of JETs, producing publications and other related matters.

CLAIR also provides a comprehensive support network for JET participants in order to ensure they settle into life in Japan and are able to conduct their duties effectively. To this end we run post-arrival orientation and periodic training seminars. We also have a counselling system to assist any JET or contracting organization in need.

[Planning and Coordination Division]
[Guidance and Counselling Division]

CLAIR's International Network

CLAIR has a network of seven overseas offices in major cities around the globe. These offices work alongside Tokyo headquarters to provide high quality services to Japanese Local Government. Our network is in close contact with their region of responsibility, allowing CLAIR to keep a finger on the pulse of developments in Local Government around the world.



* The New York, London, Paris, and Sydney offices operate under daylight savings time during the local summer season.

An Overseas Presence for Local Government

CLAIR's international network runs several programs, and any Local Government can avail itself of our assistance. In effect, the offices act as launching pads from which Local Government can interact directly with other countries. By using CLAIR's know-how, connections and physical presence in each location, Local Governments' can conduct overseas dealings with ease and efficiency. CLAIR can provide pre-departure advice and information referral, as well as set up meetings for Local Governments who wish to conduct business outside of Japan.



People-to-People Exchange

Cultural and economic exchange is based upon close personal links across national borders. CLAIR aims to promote people-to-people exchange between Japan and other countries through projects such as:

- > Conducting forums, seminars and meetings
- > Running the 'Foreign Local Government Leaders Seminar'
- > Supporting existing Sister-City relationships, and promoting new ones



Information about Japanese Local Government

CLAIR also disseminates information about Japanese Local Government policies, practices and achievements around the world. We foster awareness of how Japan finances and administers its regions, and thereby contribute to positive dialogue about improved methods of local governance. We achieve this in the following ways:

- > Providing information about CLAIR's activities
- > Producing publications about Japanese local governance, regional issues, internationalization activities etc

(Planning and Research Division)

Building International Relationships

CLAIR is eager to assist Japanese and overseas Local Governments forge relationships across international boundaries. Traditionally, this has taken the shape of sister-city relationships. CLAIR continues to provide extensive support for existing and potential partnerships. Recently, however, the focus has shifted toward trade promotion, economic engagement and people-to-people linkages between regions around the world. CLAIR supports the desire of Local Governments to be more active in this respect, and has implemented several projects to support economic and personnel exchange.

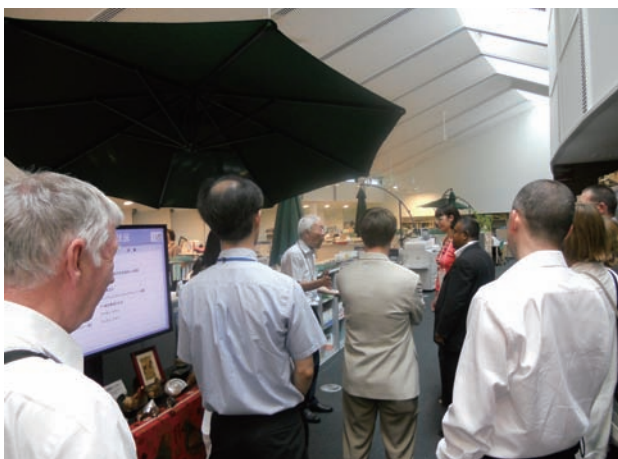
Sister-Cities

To support Sister-City relationships, CLAIR:

- collects and publishes information about forming and maintaining relationships
- surveys existing partnerships, and highlights examples of excellent exchange projects
- provides advice about partnerships, and assists in locating a suitable partner city.

Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar

CLAIR invites Local Government officials from around the world to come to Japan to participate in this seminar series. Participants attend lectures in Tokyo focusing on Japanese Local Government and then travel to the regions to observe Local Government in action. The aim of the program is to promote international understanding of Japanese Local Government, and the formation of interpersonal networks with their counterparts around the world. It also facilitates the exchange of ideas, discussion of issues of mutual concern, and contributes to positive dialogue about best practice in local governance. For more information, contact the overseas CLAIR office closest to you.



Japan-China-South Korea Trilateral Local Government Exchange Symposium

Japan, China and South Korea are linked by a similar culture and geographical proximity. This symposium aims to bring these three nations together to strengthen cooperation and exchange between them at a local level. The event has been held annually since 1999 on a rotational basis. CLAIR acts as the Japanese secretariat for this organization.

Japan-France Local Government Exchange Conference

The Japan-France Local Government Exchange Conference was held on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Japanese-French relations in 2008. This event brought together many Local Governments from both countries to discuss matters of mutual interest. It was held in Nancy, France in October 2008, and the 2nd Symposium was held in Kanazawa, Japan in May 2010. CLAIR and Kanazawa City jointly acted as the conference secretariat.



[International Exchange Division]

International Cooperation

Japanese Local Government has a wealth of expertise that has the potential to be of immense assistance overseas. CLAIR helps Japanese Local Governments to provide direct technical and practical support to their counterparts around the world. Two of our leading projects in this area are listed below.

Local Government Officials Training Program (LGOTP)

The LGOTP brings local officials from around the world to train with Japanese Local Governments. Trainees are assigned to Local Governments that have specific expertise in an area related to their home-country position. It is expected that they will apply what they learnt when they return home for the benefit of their local community. In this way Japanese Local Governments hope to contribute to the development of overseas regions, share Japanese expertise, and build people-to-people links between Local Governments around the world.



Trainees spend the first month at an educational institution in central Japan, studying the Japanese language and learning about Japanese Local Government. Each trainee then travels to their host Local Government to undertake several months training in fields as diverse as administration, environmental protection, health, education, tourism, agriculture and economic development.

CLAIR runs this program, assisting with visa applications, flights, training seminars and general administration.



Local Government International Cooperation Specialist Dispatch Project

After years of service in Local Governments, officials accumulate a wealth of knowledge in their area of speciality. These people are a valuable human resource whose skills can be harnessed to assist Local Governments around the world.

CLAIR maintains a database of suitable candidates with expertise in a diverse range of fields. As of 2010, 1,364 people are registered with the program, including currently serving officials and those who have retired. CLAIR receives requests from Local Governments around the world, and selects suitable specialists to be sent directly to the host country. They provide the host institution with the benefit of their accumulated knowledge and skills. This has the added benefit of strengthening the bonds of trust and cooperation between Local Governments in Japan and those across the globe.



(International Cooperation and Economic Relations Division)

A Culturally Diverse Japan

Japan's society is gradually becoming more and more culturally diverse. As of 2010, over 2 million foreign nationals from nearly 200 nations reside in Japan. Local governments are at the forefront of public policy related to this demographic shift. CLAIR commits significant resources to providing comprehensive support to Local Governments in their efforts to build a harmonious community comprised of members from many cultural backgrounds.

Multilingual Information

A major part of our efforts is the provision of information about living in Japan in as many community languages as possible. These languages include Chinese, Korean, Portuguese, Tagalog, English and Vietnamese, to name a few. These translated documents provide information on a wide range of issues, including visas and work permits, school enrolment procedures, garbage disposal rules, health insurance payments and government services.



Grants

CLAIR also provides financial support to Regional International Exchange Associations, which are deeply involved with their local international community. For example, we disbursed nearly 1.4 million yen to 13 Regional International Exchange Associations after a major earthquake that hit Niigata Prefecture in 2007. These associations used the money to help foreign residents get back on their feet after the disaster.

We also provide substantial grants to Local Governments and Regional International Exchange Associations for the purpose of promoting a harmonious multicultural society. These supported projects range from multilingual broadcasting initiatives, volunteer interpreting systems, culture festivals and multilingual seminars about disaster preparations.



Research and Training

Many other nations have successfully navigated the path to an ethnically diverse society. CLAIR is committed to collecting information about public policy from these advanced multicultural countries through its network of overseas offices. We also subsidize study tours of other countries by local officials who wish to see how Local Governments overseas tackle this issue.



CLAIR also cooperates with the Japan Intercultural Academy of Municipalities (JIAM) to provide professional development courses. We provide subsidies to Local Government and Regional International Exchange Association officials to attend courses related to cultural diversity, multicultural policy and related matters.

(Multiculturalism Promotion Division)

Council of Local Authorities for International Relations

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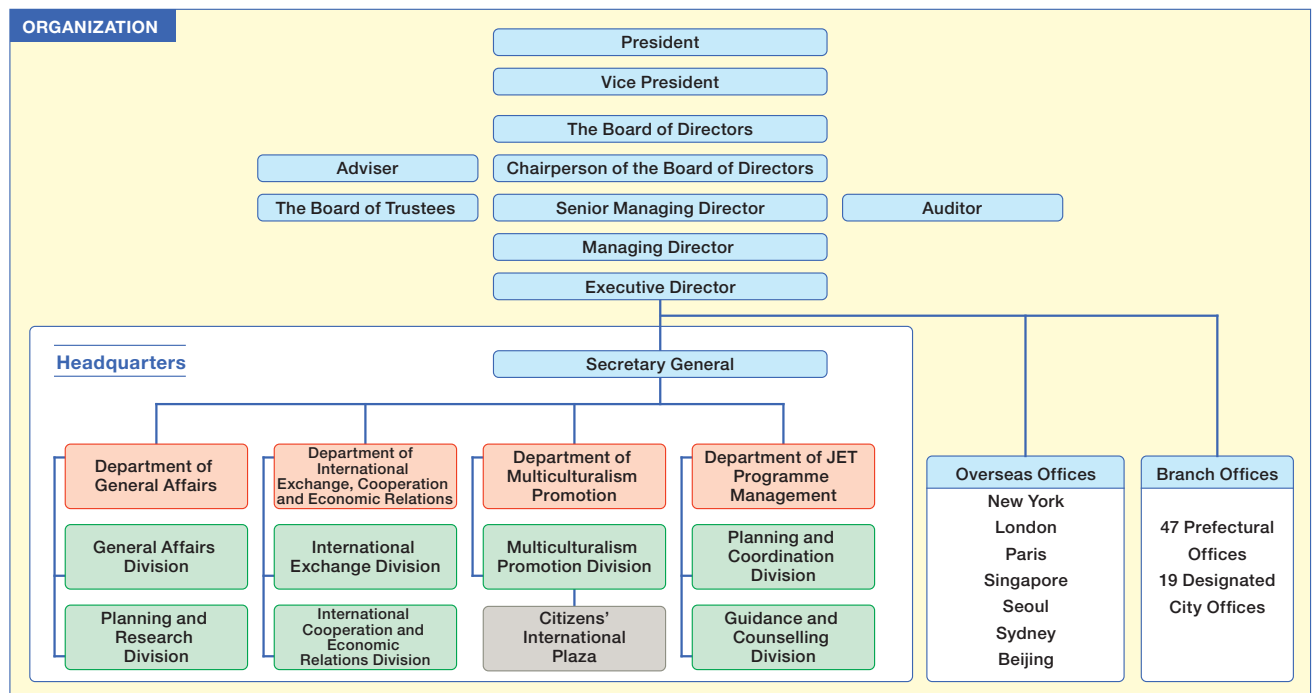
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When calling outside of Japan, omit the initial "0" and replace with the country code "81".



Visiting CLAIR by subway -
 Hanzomon Line: 1 min. walk from Exit 1 of Hanzomon Station
 Yurakucho Line: 8 min. walk from Exit 1 of Kojimachi Station



Overseas Offices



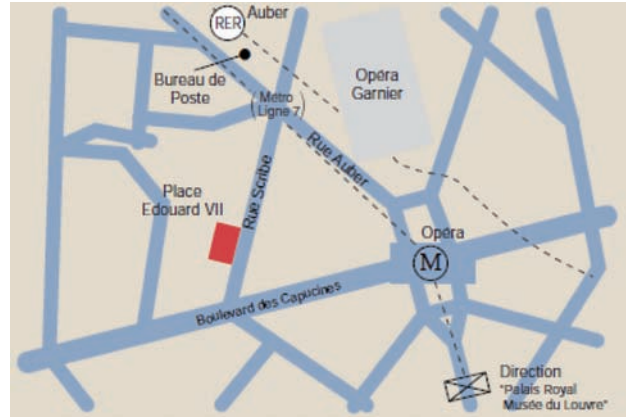
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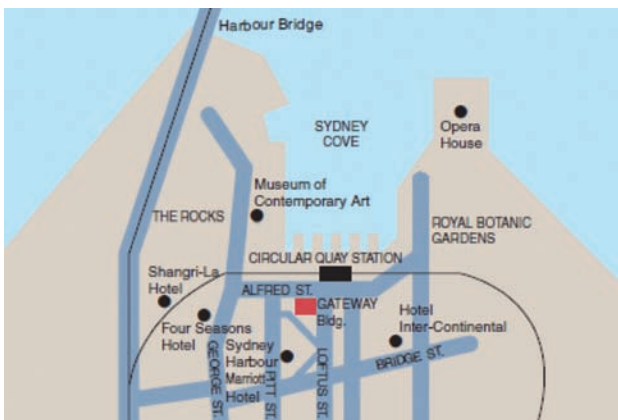
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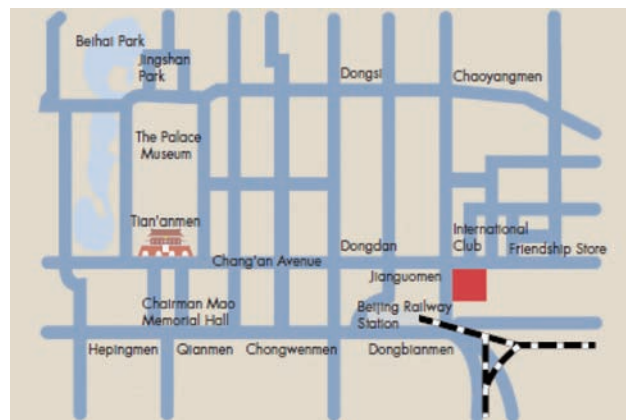
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