

HSI Report: HU-Niseko SDGs Summer School

University News | August 01, 2023

To observe actual, town-scale sustainability management, 23 Hokkaido Summer Institute (HSI) participants traveled to Niseko Town, Hokkaido, acquiring novel knowledge from the local people and establishments on the town's initiatives and projects.



The participants in LUPICIA's Main Office in Niseko, on the second day of the summer school.

Alongside three other cities and towns, the Japanese Government selected Niseko as one of Hokkaido's SDGs Future Cities—model municipalities with exemplary initiatives towards the realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Consisting of half-a-day of lectures and a two-day field trip to Niseko, this summer program was co-organized by the Institute for the Advancement of Sustainability and One Program for Global Goals (OGGs) in the framework of Hokkaido University's HSI, Institute for the Advancement of Sustainability. Participating students were from 5 different countries among which 2 were non-student participants (working adults).

On the eve of the departure, the students received a series of orientations by Prof. Satoru Kato (Institute for the Advancement of Sustainability), Prof. Tsuyoshi Setoguchi (Faculty of Engineering), and Assistant Prof. Norihiro Watanabe (Faculty of Engineering); all three also went together on the field trip. The last lecturer of the day was a guest from the industry, Ms. Mina Tsuchida, representing AWL, Inc.—a Sapporo-based AI company—one of whose projects are taking place in Niseko.



An orientation on SDGs' history by Prof. Satoru Kato

Departing early in the morning from the Sapporo Campus, after a roughly two-hour bus ride, the participants made their first stop at Niseko Town Hall and were warmly greeted by the town representatives, including Mr. Kenya Katayama, the mayor of Niseko. Mr. Takayoshi Shimasaki of Niseko Town's Planning and Environment Division explained at length about the background and the current and future situations of Niseko. The session was followed by a brief tour of the Town Hall building whose construction was based on the principles on SDGs.



The presentation by Mr. Takayoshi Shimasaki provides condensed information on Niseko Town and their sustainability initiatives.

The second stop was the main office of LUPICIA CO., LTD., a tea-based products manufacturing company with international branches. In 2020, they relocated their headquarters from Tokyo to Niseko to make the best use of Niseko's local resources. On this occasion, students learnt more in-depth about Niseko from a business perspective through a presentation-discussion session and a visit to their beer brewery next door.



A presentation led by LUPICIA's Representative Director, Ms. Kaori Morishige, in LUPICIA's main office, the building is noteworthy for its



Students tasting raw hops used by LUPICIA for their beer.

On the following day, the participants first visited the Takeo Arishima Memorial Museum. A renowned author with many other accomplishments outside literature, Takeo Arishima graduated from the Sapporo Agricultural College (former name of Hokkaido University) in 1901. In relation to Niseko and its agriculture, Arishima is highly regarded for his farmland liberation. Renouncing his ownership of a farm inherited from his father, based on the “mutual aid” principle, Arishima appointed the local farmers as the new joint-owners.



Course participants arriving at the Takeo Arishima Memorial Museum.

Close to the Museum is the Second Arishima Ostrich Farm, the last observation site for the summer school. Sharing historical ties with Takeo Arishima and maintaining a local cooperation with LUPICIA's brewery, the farm is the embodiment of the intersecting knowledge students received from this trip.



Students and lecturers feeding the ostriches. The ostrich farm was a portion of Takeo Arishima's liberated farmland. The ostriches are also feeding on organic hops waste from LUPICIA's brewery.

The Summer School culminated in students' presentations where each student shared their thoughts, analyses on Niseko Town and their sustainable initiatives, by focusing on one of Niseko Town's 11 strategic visions introduced in the orientation that are relevant to their interest.

Tzu-Wei Tseng, a second-year master's Student from National Taiwan University, raised observant points in discussion sessions during the trip. "From this unforgettable trip, SDGs are no longer mere words you hear in the classroom. I could personally experience the actual implementations. If you are interested in SDGs, I recommend you take this course."

Hokkaido Summer Institute offers 349 courses in multiple disciplines this summer. To learn more about it, visit their website:

<https://hokkaidosummerinstitute.oia.hokudai.ac.jp/>

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