

Annual Report (2019) on UN Academic Impact Activities

Iwate Prefectural University



Takizawa Campus



Miyako Campus

UNITED NATIONS
academic
impact

Sharing
a Culture
of Intellectual
Social
Responsibility

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1. Introduction

Iwate Prefectural University joined the United Nation Academic Impact Initiative in May, 2019. From the 10 Academic Impact Principles, we have committed to the following 4:

- Principle 6: Encouraging global citizenship through education
- Principle 8: Addressing issues of poverty through education
- Principle 9: Promoting sustainability through education
- Principle 10: Promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and the “unlearning” of intolerance, through education
(<https://academicimpact.un.org>)

These 4 principles are in harmony with the founding spirit and basic directions of our university.

Founding Spirit



In hopes of creating a new era of harmony among men, nature and science, we provide an education that fosters independence, knowledge and highly specialized skills which contribute to the enrichment of humanity and society.

Based on this philosophy, we have established the following 5 basic directions for the development of the university:

- The promotion of compassion and cultivation of a spirit that respects humanity
- Distinctive education and research focusing on interdisciplinary fields
- Practical education and research
- Contribution to the local community
- Contribution to the international community

Through participating in the United Nation Academic Impact, we are intending to further contribute to the globalization of our university and the internationalization of the local community. Also, through practical education and research, we will continue to engage in efforts to address poverty and work towards the realization of a sustainable society.

2. List of Highlights

The report includes information concerning Academic Impact activities undertaken in the Japanese fiscal year of 2019 (April 2019 – March 2020).

The activities undertaken in response to the Academic Impact Principles are as follows:

Principle 6: Encouraging global citizenship through education

Principle 10: Promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and the “unlearning” of intolerance, through education

- (1) Events for Understanding Intercultural Exchange
- (2) Workshop on Intercultural Understanding: January 15th, 2020
- (3) International Volunteer Project: “Mizubora”
- (4) Study Abroad Program at Ohio University

Principle 6 : Encouraging global citizenship through education

Principle 8: Addressing issues of poverty through education

- (1) Learning program to solve social issues by utilizing overseas studies for the well-being of local children and families
- (2) Fieldwork in Christchurch, New Zealand
- (3) The Children's Cafeteria “Kiwi Cafeteria” in Iwate Prefecture: Holding inclusive support events for children with various difficulties
- (4) Publication of learning program results and practical activities
- (5) Student’s evaluation of their learning

Principle 9 Promoting sustainability through education

- (1) Discussions about SDGs at The University of Indonesia and Iwate Prefectural University (November 6th, 2019)
- (2) SDGs Action Awards 2020 (February 15th, 2020)
- (3) Awareness-raising and the promotion of activities for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

3. Explanation of Highlights

Principle 6: Encouraging global citizenship through education

Principle 10: Promoting inter-cultural dialogue and understanding, and the “unlearning” of intolerance, through education

(1) Events for Understanding Intercultural Exchange

Speakers from inside and outside the university shared their experiences overseas, discussed points of communication with foreigners, and introduced their own culture and the lives of international students.

① “Stories of Volunteering in France”: May 30th, 2019

Lecturer: Mr. Arai, a student of Iwate Prefectural University

Mr. Arai introduced the story of his experience on the CIEE (Council on International Education Exchange) international volunteer program, in particular, the rebuilding of a church in France.



② ““Omotenashi” English conversation course” : July 12th, 2019

Lecturer: Ms. Peggy Ishikawa, Iwate International Exchange Association

Drawing on both personal experiences and other examples, participants discussed different means by which to convey “*Omotenashi*” (Japanese-style hospitality) when communicating with foreigners whom they are meeting for the first time. They experienced using authentic phrases to introduce oneself and convey hospitality in true to life role-play scenarios.



③ “Studying Foreign Languages in Japan”: October 30th, 2019

Lecturers: Associate Prof. H. Takahashi, Associate Prof. Lupusa Cornelia Daniela and Prof. Tee Kian Heng of Iwate Prefectural University

This presentation and panel discussion event was held to discuss the study of foreign languages in Japan. Students shared issues related to language learning and learning methods.

④ “Life in Iwate, Japan from the Perspective of Foreign Students”: December 19th, 2019

Lecturer: Ms. Lee Sou, International Student of Iwate Prefectural University

Ms. Lee introduced her hometown (Shandong Province, China), her life in Japan and her hobbies (making accessories). She also discussed what she likes about, and doesn't understand about Japanese people.



(2) Workshop on Intercultural Understanding : January 15th, 2020

① “The Social Networks of International Students in Japan”

Lecturer: Associate Professor Kumiko Hosogoe, Faculty of Social Welfare,
Iwate Prefectural University

This talk discussed the social networking needs of international students. International students have two major goals: academic achievement and cultural adaptation. To succeed in both, they need to develop social networks. There are three types of networks: the monocultural network, which involves relationships with people from one’s own country; the bicultural network, which involves relationships with people from the host country; and the multicultural network, which involves relationships with people from various countries. As the first step forwards building a stable livelihood, students are required to interact with Japanese people and at the same time to maintain informal relationships within monocultural or multicultural networks.



② “ Student Life at Ohio University”

Lecturer: Mr. Kenta Takahashi, Student of Faculty of Social Welfare,
Iwate Prefectural University

Mr. Takahashi talked about his study abroad experience at Ohio University, which was supported by the “*Tobitate!* Young Ambassador Program.” Giving examples of prejudice-filled conversations he encountered in the U.S., he came to the conclusion that studying abroad is one of the greatest opportunities to question commonly held beliefs and become aware of one’s unconscious prejudices.



(3) International Volunteer Project : “Mizubora”

Together with students, teachers, and staff from Ohio University in the United States, Iwate Prefectural University has been engaging in reconstruction support in the disaster-stricken areas of the Great East Japan Earthquake and subsequent Tsunami that occurred on March 11th, 2011. The first project was conducted in September, 2011, and the second in September, 2012. From 2013, students and teachers from Chubu University and Honjo International Scholarship Foundation recipients have also participated this activity.

This volunteer project, called “Mizubora”, distributes boxes of bottled water to local residents who have been forced to move into emergency temporary housing or disaster relief public housing. Having international volunteers not only creates opportunities for residents, particularly elderly people living alone, to have someone to speak with and feel looked out for, but also energizes them. The Honjo International Scholarship Foundation provides several thousand 1 liter bottles of water every year.

This year, for the ninth time, a total of 90 members from the above universities and the Honjo International Scholarship Foundation, participated in this activity at the disaster relief public housing in Rikuzentakata City, Iwate Prefecture. They also took part in cleaning and disinfecting works at a trout/salmon hatchery. In the past, this project has also carried out various programs in addition to “Mizubora”, such as exchange activities through local performing arts, tea ceremonies, and experience lectures on earthquake and tsunami disasters by the story club, etc.

The following is the impression of one of the students from Iwate Prefectural University:

“What I felt working together with international students is that there are no borders in volunteerism. The international students showed genuine concern about residents and worked hard with smiles. Seeing this, I realized that the volunteer activity was great in making it possible to collaborate with people from all over the world. If a disaster occurs in a foreign country, I wish to go there to lend support.”





(4) Study Abroad Program at Ohio University

Reporter: Ms. Nanae Maeta, Student of Miyako Junior Colledge

Ever since I was in junior high school, I have been interested in Western movies and music, and have wanted to go abroad. When I entered Miyako Junior College, I learned about the study abroad program at Ohio University. Even if it was only for a short period of time, I was eager to learn English and many other things at a foreign university and I decided to join this program.

At the university, classes were held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., six hours a day, and once a week I had English lessons while receiving individual instruction in speaking and writing. After classes, I used to go to the library to work on assignments with other students. When we had time, we spent it watching basketball and ice hockey games together. In the dormitory, I shared a room with an American student who could not speak Japanese at all. At first, I was worried about whether I would be able to have a good time, but by the time I returned to Japan, we were able to have a pleasant conversations in English.

[At Ohio University]



During my study abroad, there were many things I didn't know about Japan, and I often had trouble in responding. As a result, I acquired the habit of immediately looking up things I did not understand. I also began to consciously study English and watch world news so that I could make use of what I had experienced and learned during my study abroad.

Upon coming back to Japan, I was invited to Miyako Harbor Radio's program "Interculturalism" to talk about my study abroad experience and introduce Ohio.

[Radio Appearance]

Because I have been interested in hunger and poverty, since I was a freshman in junior college, I want to go to a four-year university to deepen my understanding of poverty and international society. Moreover, in the future I would like to become a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) member, JICA staff, or an international NGO staff, to help as many people who are suffering from hunger and poverty as possible, both in Japan and abroad.



Principle 6 : Encouraging global citizenship through education

Principle 8 : Addressing issues of poverty through education

(1) Learning Program to Solve Social Issues by Utilizing Overseas Studies for the Well-being of Local Children and Families

① Active learning to Solve Children's Welfare Issues

Since the 2017 fiscal year, Associate Professor of the Faculty of Social Welfare, Yukie Sakura has been trialing a learning program in which students can learn independently and through hands-on experience in social initiatives (activities to create new support). This program aims at solving welfare issues that threaten children's growth, such as poverty and social exclusion.

② Students' Learning Goals

Students' learning goals through this program are as follows:

- To be able to consider issues from a comprehensive and multifaceted perspective
- To be able to have open dialogue and collaborate with diverse partners
- To be able to practice social actions

③ 2019 Learning Programs and Practical Activities

In 2019, seven students planned and practiced social activities in the following learning programs:

- Student-led pre-study sessions (July 2018 to February 2019)
- Fieldwork in Christchurch, New Zealand (March 2019)
- Practical activities for supporting children in Takizawa City which is the location of Iwate Prefectural University (July 2019)

(2) Fieldwork in Christchurch, New Zealand

① Visiting Education and Welfare Sites: Learning about Early Childhood Education, Families and Child Welfare, and Support for Special Needs

Students learned *Te Whariki* (an education curriculum in New Zealand) in an early childhood education facility, and conducted fieldwork at companies where people with disabilities work, as well as facilities for children with disabilities that have been established by their parents and government agencies. In addition, they worked hard to interview parents, exchange opinions with host families, and debate among students.



Early Childhood Education



Public Library



Inclusive Companies

Student Discussions



② Fundraising at Japan Day event in New Zealand for future activities

Students played a ninja target game at the Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction Support Event (Japan Day) in Christchurch, NZ. At the event, they introduced the intention of holding the “*Kodomo Shokudo: Children’s Cafeteria*”, collected donations from visitors, and carried out fundraising for future activities.



(3) “Kiwi Cafeteria” in Iwate Prefecture: Holding inclusive support events for children with various difficulties

Although the Children’s Cafeteria is named a “cafeteria”, it is not just a place to serve meals. The “Kiwi Cafeteria” was held as a cafeteria to support children with the aim of social inclusion. The name “Kiwi” originates from what students learned in New Zealand. In order to support single-parent families and children with disabilities, it was planned in cooperation with local NPOs, and held using funds raised in New Zealand. The cafeteria invited parents and children from single-parent families using the NPO Inkle Iwate, children with disabilities who attend the day service “Airship” after school, and students from Morioka Minami Special Needs School. More than 30 participants enjoyed playing sports and games together, making desserts with recipes learned from New Zealand host families, and smiling. We are convinced that the joint activities for such diverse people will create powerful bonds within the local community. This activity was featured in the newspaper, increasing local awareness of initiatives.



(4) Publication of Learning Program Results and Practical Activities

The learning program and practical activities mentioned above were introduced to visitors at the New Zealand booth at the university open campus. They were also reported at the briefing session of the International Exchange Program during the university festival. In addition, at the briefing meeting held in the Faculty of Social Welfare, students exchanged opinions with local residents from the International Association of Takizawa City.



(5) Student’s evaluation of their learning

In evaluating students’ learning activities, the ICE (Ideas, Connections, Extensions) model was used. This model focused on: ① New knowledge/concepts and the amount of definitions and vocabulary acquired, ② The ability to grasp the relationship and connections between new content and previously understood concepts, and ③ The ability to apply newly acquired knowledge into practice, and to create new ideas. The students’ high evaluation scores in all three areas confirm the students’ development of these very important creative skills.

Principle 9 : Promoting sustainability through education

(1) Discussions about SDGs in University of Indonesia (UI) and Iwate Prefectural University (IPU) (November 6th , 2019)

- Participants:

University of Indonesia

Dr. Ir. Riri Fitri Sari, Professor and Chairperson of UI GreenMetric World University Rankings

Iwate Prefectural University

Dr. Atsuto Suzuki, President

Dr. Kotaro Shibuya, Professor of Faculty of Policy Studies

Dr. Basabi Chakraborty, Professor of Faculty of Software Information

Dr. Prima Oky Dicky Ardiansyah, Associate Professor of Faculty of Software Information

Mr. Nobuyuki Kaneto, Planning Manager of Administrative Office

① GreenMetric World University Ranking initiated by University of Indonesia

For the last 9 years, UI GreenMetric has become one of the flagship programs of The University of Indonesia. It ranks universities around the world based on appointed indicators of campus environmental issues such as setting and infrastructure, energy, waste management, water, transportation, and education. This ranking system is one of the university's initiatives to promote sustainability on campuses and involve various stakeholders in efforts to create a sustainable environment for the world. Currently, the network comprises 719 participating universities from 81 countries located in the dynamic and diverse regions of Asia, Africa, North America and Oceania.

(<http://greenmetric.ui.ac.id/what-is-greenmetric/>)



② Implementation of Environment-Focused Measures in Iwate Prefectural University

Iwate Prefectural University was established in 1998. The campus facilities were designed considering the hilly location and landscape, reducing environmental load, and installing cutting edge energy-saving technologies. Below are several examples of the effective use of natural energy, using a passive solar-system.

• Opening and Shutting Skylight

The ceiling of each faculty building has a skylight window which is possible to open and close electronically as a natural ventilation window. This window opens automatically when the outside air temperature and/or the ceiling temperature of the building rises above 20°C with a wind speed of less than 10 m/s. Fig. 1 shows a skylight window as seen from the inside (left) and the outside (right) of a faculty building.

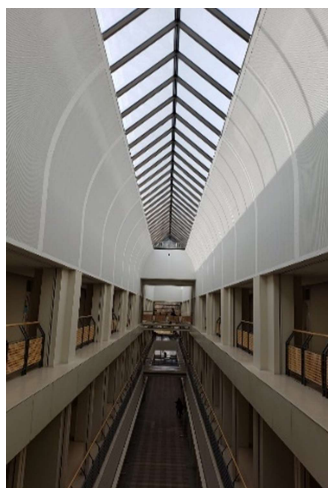
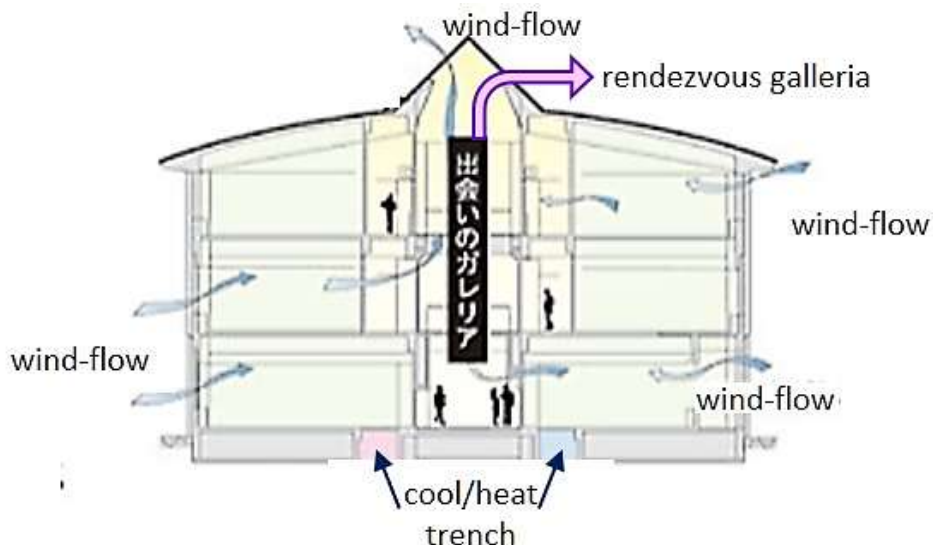


Fig. 1: Skylight windows.



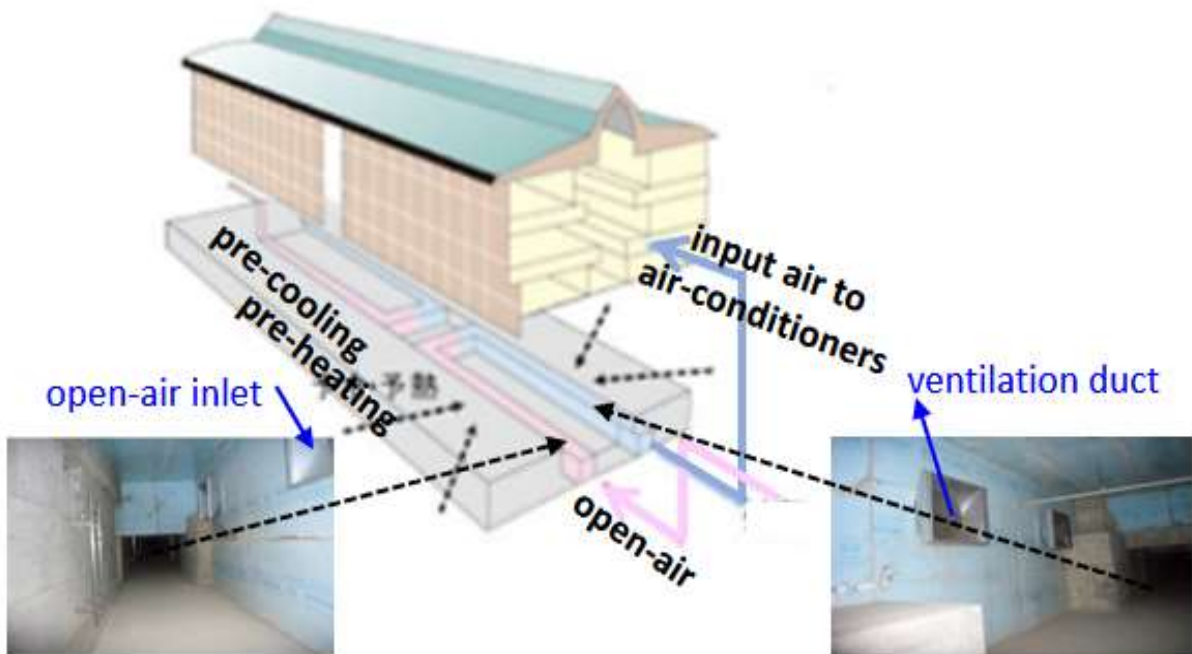
Fig. 2: Natural wind-flow inside a faculty building when a skylight is open.



- Geothermal Air-conditioning System, Using the Cool/Heat Trench Method

There are two trenches under the floor of each faculty building as shown in Fig.3. Open-air is taken in on one side of the trench, and is cooled/heated via the underground trenches in summer/winter. This air which is pre-cooled/ pre-warmed is utilized for the input of air-conditioners in faculty buildings. Thanks to this system, the outside air is cooled down by $\sim 6^{\circ}\text{C}$ in summertime and heated up by $\sim 9^{\circ}\text{C}$ in wintertime before being sent to air-conditioners. The cool/heat trench is 2.6 m high and 1.8 m wide. Its total length of the entire faculty building is 1,300 m and its total ground contact area is 4,000 m^2 , making it the largest system in Japan at the time of the opening of our university in 1998.

Fig. 3 : Conceptual illustration of the trench mechanism.



- Green-Leaf Curtain

Since 2012, we have installed Green-Leaf curtains to improve the learning environment in summer. In addition to lowering the temperature, the cool colors of Green-Leaf curtains are said to have a positive psychological effect.



(2) SDGs Action Awards 2020 (February 15th, 2020)

Iwate Prefectural University Students Win Grand Prix at UNIVERSITY SDGs ACTION AWARDS 2020 (<https://www.iwate-pu.ac.jp/information/unai/sdgsawards2020.html>)

On February 15th, 2020, in the final stage of the “UNIVERSITY SDGs ACTION! AWARDS 2020” (sponsored by Asahi Shimbun Newspaper Company), Iwate Prefectural University students Hayato TAJIRI and Takashi YAMADA (representatives of a non-profit organization called IRC Project; second-year undergraduates of Department of Software and Information) won the First Prize (Grand Prix) for their project, “People, Things, and Community Development to Create a Super Smart Society”. At the final screening, 12 finalist groups who were selected from more than 100 entries from universities all over Japan, gave thoughtful presentations at the Shibuya QWS Scramble Hall in Tokyo.

The judges gave high evaluations to the IRC Project with remarks such as “Their presentation is outstanding because the IRC Project tackles its regional/community issues thoroughly with a down-to-earth approach and their strength is in their understanding of the community challenges as their own.”



<https://www.asahi.com/dialog/articles/13117068>



Mr. Hayato Tajiri (left) and
Mr. Takashi Yamada (right)

The presentation summary is shown below.

“People, Things, and Community Development
to Create a Super Smart Society”

Today's Iwate: The Place We Live Now

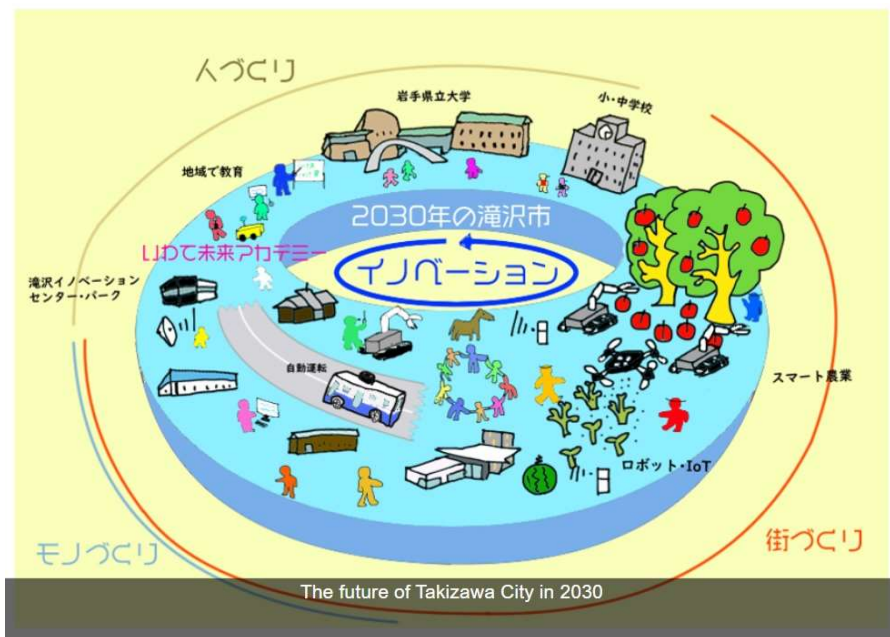
We are active in Takizawa City, Iwate Prefecture, with the aims of “support for the next generation”, “manufacturing” and “urban development” that contribute to a super-smart society. A super-smart society is a society in which people can live comfortably by making full use of IT technology.

Geographically, Iwate Prefecture is the second largest prefecture in Japan. However, its population is the third lowest and has been decreasing every year. The main reasons for this are the shortage of local employment and a lack of workplaces in which we can maximize our abilities. In FY2017 data, the average annual income in Iwate Prefecture was the fifth-worst in Japan.

While the overconcentration of people and work is becoming a remarkable issue in Tokyo other major metropolitan areas, the vast area of land in Iwate Prefecture provides the ideal place for agriculture. This spacious landscape cannot be found in Tokyo. Still, we are concerned that the number of people who engage in agriculture/farming is decreasing and that the survival of the Iwate agricultural sector itself is at risk.

Classroom Robotics: “Iwate Future Academy” and Nurturing the Next Generation

Classroom Robotics for school children will contribute to the realization of goals 4, 8, 9, and 11 among the Sustainable Development Goals. Below is a depiction of the way that we visualize the future of Takizawa City in 2030.



First of all, with regard to nurturing human resources, we would like to foster children’s skills and encourage them to choose to work for companies in Takizawa City and Iwate Prefecture, or to start their own businesses here in the future. Therefore, we established the NPO IRC Project and started the robot classroom “Iwate Future Academy” with the aim of helping children develop specialized skills from childhood. Nine children are currently attending.

In addition, in order to learn about manufacturing sites, we conduct factory tours with the cooperation of local companies. Creating a community in which it is easy to raise and educate children will also lead to the creation of a city where people can continue to live. The NPO IRC Project is striving to make use of the entire area and community for education.

Autonomous Mobile Robots: Burden Reduction on Community Problems

If we can actualize an effective cycle of manufacturing and community development in the future, then we will see more people become entrepreneurs in Takizawa city and create a support system for future entrepreneurship.

If we can achieve this, we believe that this cycle will lead to sustainable economic growth. In addition, when employment is created, it is also expected to promote further innovation at its heart. If this cycle of manufacturing and urban development can contribute to the resolution of the issues in Iwate Prefecture, we will move closer to the realization of a super-smart society.

As the first step, we have paid attention to apple farmers. Apple farming incorporates many different types of work including harvesting, pesticide spraying, transport, and the detection of disease. In light of a declining farming population that is also increasing in age, the farmers' work will become increasingly hard. Particularly in expansive areas of land like those in Iwate Prefecture. In order to reduce the burden on agriculture, we are engaging in research and development with the desire to solve this problem using autonomous mobile robots. In the future, we hope to realize a cycle of manufacturing and urban development by starting business ventures based on this research and the development of agricultural robots.

Making Iwate the Place Where We Want to Work and Live

In the Department of Software and Information Studies of Iwate Prefectural University, many of our graduates find jobs not in Iwate Prefecture, but in the Tokyo metropolitan area. However, we want our students to work in Iwate Prefecture, which is rich in nature and comfortable to live in. Through our activities, we will continue to create an Iwate in which future generations will want to live and work.

(3) Awareness-Raising and the Promotion of Activities for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Lecturer: Professor Khotaro Shibuya, Faculty of Policy Studies,

Iwate Prefectural University

Although the SDGs launched by the United Nations in 2015, are an important challenge that the world is working on in order to create a sustainable society, Iwate prefecture has low awareness of them and is lagging in its efforts. Given this, awareness-raising and the promotion of activities related to the SDGs have been carried out in various sectors such as government, companies, schools, and the community. These initiatives have been implemented in response to the promotion of sustainability in Principle 9 of the United Nations Academic Impact.

Specifically, in order to introduce the SDGs, workshops using the “2030 SDGs Card Game” were carried out as lectures and exercises for people in the above sectors. We also undertook workshops using the “SDGs de Regional Revitalization Card Game” with the theme being more focused on regional revitalization. In addition, an open lecture for the general public was held at Iwate Prefectural University on the theme of “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” on July 27th, 2019.

As a result of these activities, interest in the SDGs is gradually increasing in Iwate Prefecture, and requests for workshops have been raised from various sectors.

“SDGs Card Game”

June 16th, 2019



Oct. 27th, 2019



Nov. 9th, 2019



4. Summary

We embarked on a new step towards SDGs, joining the United Nation Academic Impact in May, 2019. Although each activity step is small, we encourage various grassroots activities related to SDGs.

On top of that, in cooperating with overseas universities through the United Nation Academic Impact initiative, we are taking on the virtuous challenge of creating a sustainable Earth on which to live.

