



KAKEHASHI Project (Canada)

Visiting Japan Program for Canadian Young Leaders Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

From November 24 to November 30, five participants—four working youths and one graduate student from Canada—were invited to Japan for a program designed to explore approaches to multicultural coexistence and to exchange views on potential business collaboration between Japan and Canada, with the aim of fostering future partnerships.

Throughout the program, participants deepened their understanding of Japan's political, economic, social, cultural, historical, and foreign policy landscape. Cultural visits offered valuable insights into heritage preservation. Participants also engaged in exchanges with relevant parties and actively shared the appeal of Japan they encountered through various platforms.

【Participants】 Total: 5 participants from Canada (4 working youths, 1 graduate student)

【Locations】 Tokyo, Hokkaido

【Schedule】

■ Online Pre-study Program:

Nov. 14 (Fri) **【Pre-departure Orientation】** Project objective and mission, rundown of the schedule, overseas travel warnings, precautions of infectious disease, etc.

Set Period Prior to Arrival **【Video Viewing】** “Lecture on Japan” (Choose on Web Japan)

■ Invitation Program:

Nov. 24 (Mon) Arrival at Narita International Airport

【Post-arrival Orientation】

Nov. 25 (Tue) **【Observation】** Embassy of Canada in Japan

【Observation】 Keidanren (Japan Business Federation)

【Observation】 Imperial Palace

Nov. 26 (Wed) **【Observation】** National Diet Building

【Observation】 DMZ Japan

【Observation】 Fukagawa Edo Museum

【Courtesy Call】

Mr. ONISHI Yohei, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs

Nov. 27 (Thu) Travel from Tokyo to Hokkaido

【Observation】 Upopoy National Ainu Museum

Nov. 28 (Fri) **【Observation】**

Red Brick Building, Former Hokkaido Government Office Building

【Courtesy Call】

Mr. KINOSHITA Hiroshi, Director International Affairs, Bureau of International Affairs, Department Policy Planning and Coordination Hokkaido Government

【Theme Related Observation】

Inter Region Co. Ltd., Rakuno Gakuen University

Nov. 29 (Sat)

Travel from Hokkaido to Tokyo

【Observation】 Asakusa

【Cultural Experience】 Tea Ceremony Experience

Nov. 30 (Sun)

【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans

Departure from Narita International Airport

2. Program Photos

Invitation Program



November 25 **【Observation】**
Embassy of Canada in Japan



November 25 **【Observation】**
Keidanren (Japan Business Federation)



November 25 **【Observation】** Imperial Palace



November 26 **【Observation】** National Diet Building



November 25 **【Observation】** DMZ Japan



November 25 **【Courtesy Call】** Mr. ONISHI Yohei,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs

	
November 27 【Observation】 Upopoy National Ainu Museum	November 28 【Observation】 Red Brick Building, Former Hokkaido Government Office Building
	
November 28 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. KINOSHITA Hiroshi, Director International Affairs, Bureau of International	November 28 【Theme Related Observation】 Inter Region Co. Ltd., Rakuno Gakuen University
	
November 29 【Cultural Experience】 Tea Ceremony Experience	November 30 【Reporting Session】

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Graduate Student

What impressed me most was the willingness to gauge conversations from across diverse organizations from government to industry and their willingness to discuss the importance of Japan Canada relations. Along with the quality of infrastructure and ease of transport in such a massive city.

◆ Working Youth

I was very impressed with the visit to Rakuno Gakuen University. It allowed us to not only tour the space, but to interact and hear real life experiences from faculty and students.

I also really enjoyed our visit with the Hokkaido government and the ability to ask them meaningful questions and receive thoughtful answers.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Observation Destination Representative

As one of the few startup-support organizations from Canada operating in Japan, I feel that simply getting people to recognize our presence was already a major achievement. Among the participants were representatives from Investissement Québec and people working at startups, so I'm hopeful this might lead to some kind of collaboration in the future.

◆ Observation Destination Representative

There were two opportunities for our staff to interact with the participants, and they received many questions from them. It really felt like they were genuinely interested in Ainu culture. Going forward, we'd like to continue proposing programs that focus mainly on direct interactions. Seeing how the foreign delegation showed such strong interest in Ainu culture, we at our organization hope to continue learning how to get more people interested in the culture as well.

5. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt), Articles, etc.



November 25, 2025 (Facebook)

Working Youth

Day1 in Japan

Grateful to kick off this journey with an inspiring and truly meaningful first day. Our group had the opportunity to visit the Embassy of Canada, Keidanren (Japan Business Federation) and Imperial Palace in Tokyo.

One highlight was seeing indigenous representation through artwork at the Embassy of Canada. It was meaningful to feel a connection to home and to see indigenous voices reflected even across the world.

Each stop offered a unique perspective--from learning about Canada-Japan relations, to hearing insights on Japan's business landscape, to experiencing the cultural and historical heart of Tokyo.

A huge thank you to everyone who welcomed us, shared their time, and engaged in thoughtful conversations. Your hospitality and openness made today incredibly impactful. Looking forward to the days ahead and continuing to learn connect, and grow.



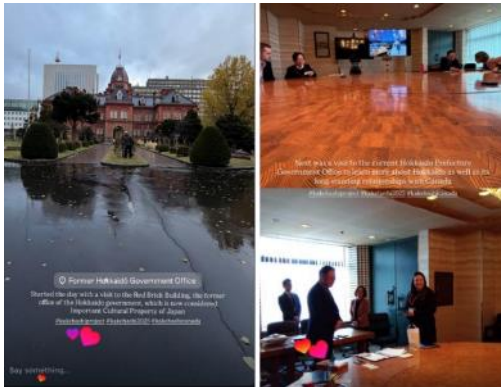
November 26, 2025 (Facebook, etc.)

Working Youth

As part of the KAKEHASHI Project, I had the opportunity to meet Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs ONISHI Yohei at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan in my capacity as Chair of the Québec–Japan Business Forum.

We discussed strengthening relations among Japan, Québec, and Canada—particularly in the area of bilateral economic ties—as well as future prospects for cooperation and friendship between our regions.

Participating in exchange activities like this, which aim to bridge cultures and perspectives, has further strengthened my commitment to promoting dialogue between Québec/Canada and Japan.



November 28, 2025 (Instagram)

Started the day with a visit to the Red Brick Building, the former office of the Hokkaido government, which is now considered an Important Cultural Property of Japan.

Next was a visit to the current Hokkaido Prefectural Government Office to learn more about Hokkaido as well as its long standing relationships with Canada.



December 5, 2025 (Forum d'affaires Québec-Japon' X)

KAKEHASHI Project Report#1

Through discussions with the Embassy of Canada, Keidanren, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (with Parliamentary Vice-Minister ONISHI Yohei), participants reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation as a "bridge" between Japan and Canada. They also visited the National Diet Building and the startup-support organization DMZ Japan.

Next stop: Sapporo in Hokkaido.



December 5, 2025 (Forum d'affaires Québec-Japon' X)

KAKEHASHI Project Report#2

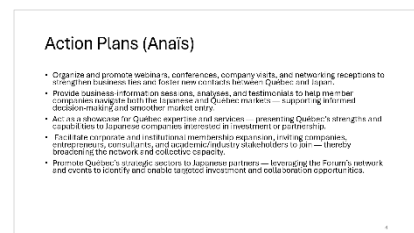
After touring the Red Brick Government Building, participants exchanged views with the Hokkaido Government on renewable energy, semiconductors, and AI.

Participants also visited Rakuno Gakuen University to learn about their sustainable agriculture initiatives, and deepened their understanding of Ainu culture at the Upopoy National Ainu Museum and Park.

Many of these themes resonate strongly with Québec's current realities and its vision for the future.

6. Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plan at the Reporting Session (excerpt)

Locations: Tokyo, Hokkaido – Presentation by 1 group



【Results of the Program】

◆ Learnings from the program

- While values such as politeness, social harmony, and a passion for innovation are common to both Canada and Japan, what we thought is unique to Japan was the culture of deep respect for others, which was evident in everyday interactions, business etiquette, and the building of long-term relationships.
- We also learned about the various initiatives and programs that promote cooperative relations between Canada and Japan, including economic partnerships and people-to-people exchanges, and realized the importance of the KAKEHASHI Project (Canada).
- We are totally blown away by the deliciousness of Japanese food. We were overwhelmed with emotion to be able to experience the craftsmanship exemplified by sushi, the diversity of regional cuisine, and the exceptional cuisine backed by world-class quality. The freshness of Japanese sashimi made us wonder what kind of sushi we had been eating in Canada, and we were amazed at Japan's preservation techniques.

- We had a first opportunity to experience the culture of Japan's indigenous Ainu people, which was a fascinating experience for us coming from Canada, where First Nations peoples play an important role in society. We were inspired by the similarities between First Nations people in Canada and the Ainu people of Hokkaido, such as their traditional clothing and dance etc.
- We also learned how Japanese researchers and students are commercializing technology and launching new businesses, including university-based ventures, and it was inspiring to learn about the position of startups in Japan.

◆ Personal Outlooks

Given the rapidly changing global situation, the five of us hope to work together to widely share the insights and learnings we gained through the KAKEHASHI Project and contribute to furthering people-to-people exchanges between Canada and Japan.

From a First Nations perspective, we hope to share our cultural experiences in various parts of Japan, such as our shared values with the Ainu people, with indigenous communities in Canada to deepen our mutual understanding.

Furthermore, we hope to bring back the learnings and networks we forged during our visit to Canada's business community, helping to increase the number of economic missions and ultimately raise interest in two-way investment between Canada and Japan, thereby contributing to building a stronger economic relationship between the two countries.

【Individual Action Plans】

● Investissement Québec

As a member of Investissement Québec, I plan to implement the following activities:

- Organize webinars, conferences, company visits, and networking receptions to strengthen economic ties between Québec and Japan and foster new connections.
- Provide business information sessions, analyses, and case studies to help member companies smoothly expand their operations in both the Japanese and Québec markets.
- Showcase Québec's strengths and capabilities to Japanese companies interested in investing and partnering, and identify new opportunities for collaboration.

● University of Toronto – Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

As a master's student at the Centre for Japanese Studies, I aim to strengthen knowledge exchange between Canada and Japan by widely communicating with relevant stakeholders:

- Produce a report and a short video introducing the lessons learned and key findings from the KAKEHASHI Project.
- Invite Japanese researchers and government officials to the Center to promote interaction with Canadian citizens and academics.
- From the perspective of supporting SMEs, work to improve the attitudes of Canadian companies hesitant to enter the Japanese market and assist those unsure how to collaborate with large Japanese firms.
- Promote further research into Japan's innovation and startup ecosystem based on my direct observations during the program.

- First Nations Communities – Youth Councils
 - Share my KAKEHASHI experience with local youth councils.
 - Create forums and clear summaries of the program to help Indigenous youth learn how to participate in KAKEHASHI in the future.
 - Promote stronger relationships between Indigenous communities in Canada and Japan.
- Jewish Community in Winnipeg
 - Foster connections with the local Japanese community through a “Shabbat Dinner Program” that shares customs and traditions.
 - Conduct research on the Jewish community in Japan, with the help of a former rabbi acquaintance in Shibuya, and develop an educational program to spread this knowledge locally.
- British Columbia Association of First Nations Friendship Centres

As a project manager, I gained significant inspiration from my KAKEHASHI experience and plan to share it through future events:

- Meet with the Consul General of Japan in Canada to discuss setting up a booth at Gathering Our Voices, an Indigenous youth conference in Vancouver in March 2026.
- Work toward hosting a cultural exchange event that invites Ainu representatives to Canada.
- Reconnect with the professor from Rakuno Gakuen University to discuss global environmental governance and promoting Indigenous conservation activities.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)