

Citizen Deliberation Meetings (*Shimin Tougikai*)

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1. Overview

The "citizen deliberation meeting" (*Shimin tougikai*; from now on, CDM) is perhaps one of the most popular deliberative democracy methods used by Japanese municipalities. For these meetings, a random sampling of residents is recruited, and these residents are offered (as paid work) the opportunity to participate in deliberations over policy issues in small groups. The method is based on the "planning cell" concept used in Germany. Young local business people in junior chamber organizations have made a significant contribution to the spread of CDMs across Japan.

About Junior Chamber International Japan (JCI Japan)

JCI Japan began operating in 1949. Today, around 700 local organizations consist of JCI Japan at the municipal level, with about 36,000 active members.

In JCI, "junior" refers to young age, as members are required to be between 20 and 40 years of age under the organization's rules. JCI Japan members have a high level of participation in local politics and the economy because approximately 90% are local business managers or executives, including about 40% who are the president or representative directors in their companies. For further information, please visit the official JCI Japan website at <http://www.jaycee.or.jp>.

2. Short History

By the early to mid-2000s, several scholars had published works, including technical books, on democratic innovation methods such as planning cells in Japan. Professor Hajime Shinohara's book *Citizens' Political Studies (Shimin-no Seijigaku)* is one of the most influential books. (Professor Shinohara, an emeritus professor at Tokyo University whose work focused on comparative politics, European politics, and German political history, passed away in 2015.)

In these intellectual streams, in November 2004, members of the Politics and Government Policy Committee within the Junior Chamber International Tokyo invited Professor Akinori Shinoto, a specialist on German civil societies at Beppu University, to give a lecture on the planning cell method, based on the advice of Professor Shinohara.

Then, in 2005, the first trial or pilot simulation of CDM was conducted by the Junior Chamber Chiyoda Ward Committee, Tokyo. In 2006, the first official CDM was held in

Mitaka City, Tokyo, which was co-sponsored by the Junior Chamber International Mitaka (Mitaka JC) and the Mitaka City Office.

After the first official meeting in Mitaka City, the number of CDM increased dramatically. By March 2018, there had been more than 500 conferences held in many municipalities across Japan, according to surveys by the Citizens' Discussion Promotion Network (CDPN). In this diffusion process, JCI's human networks and social capital were the main drivers for the exchange of information and experience. Mr. Sumio Yoshida, an active member of the first Mitaka Deliberation Meeting as a leader in Mitaka JC, and Mr. Kenichi Kobari, a Tokyo JCI staff person who supported several municipal projects, are famous technical evangelists for CDM. Mr. Yoshida and Mr. Kobari founded the CDPN in 2008, and CDPN's annual "Citizen Deliberation Meetings Fair" is an essential venue for sharing the achievements and progress of the CDM concept.

Now, some cities that have held CDM annually for several years have witnessed community development effects. In Mitaka City, Mitaka Citizen Collaboration Network, a nonprofit corporation operating Mitaka city-founded citizen collaboration center, established training courses on volunteers for CDM under the leadership of Mr. Sumio Yoshida. Another famous case is Toyoyama Town in Aichi Prefecture, which successfully organized "community development supporters." Toyoyama Town, whose population is 15,000, has continued to randomly sample 2,000 persons each year and held CDMs from 2011 to 2015 with the support of Dr. Masaharu Ito (Okute Planning Office) and Professor Hiroe Maeda (Nanzan University). As a result, most households in the town have had family members nominated for participation, and quite a few residents of the town are veteran participants of these meetings. Some veteran participants gathered and worked for CDMs in 2016 and 2017.

Other continuously held CDMs include Machida City in the Tokyo metropolis, which held them annually from 2007 to 2016, Takasaki City in Gunma Prefecture, keeps them from 2009 to 2018 and Tajimi City in Gifu Prefecture from 2009 to present. Those cases are collaborative endeavors between local junior chamber organizations and city offices.

However, in contrast to the expansion in the number of CDMs held, institutionalization of the practice in city by-laws has remained scarce. By mid-2018, as far as we know, only two cities, Iwakura City in Aichi Prefecture and Yoshikawa City in Saitama Prefecture, have added CDM as a formal method for citizen participation in their city ordinances. Even still, the cities of Iwakura and Yoshikawa have not continuously held CDMs. Iwakura City first used the CDM method in 2017 after the city enacted its citizen participation ordinance in April 2016. Iwakura's citizens deliberated on the redevelopment of a former city facility that the city had previously used for school

lunch preparations. On the other hand, Mitaka City, which has the most experience with CDMs, as mentioned above, does not list CDM as an official procedure in their by-laws.

3. Characteristics of the Citizen Deliberation Meeting (*Shimin Tougikai*)

1) Deliberation Procedure

At a CDM, organizers divide randomly selected citizens into small groups (typically, five or six persons each). After short lectures by technical experts or local government officials who are in charge of the issue under consideration, each group deliberates by themselves (without expert facilitators) on the topics designated by organizers. At the end of the discussion time, each group reports several significant opinions on their results. Also, participants individually show their view through cumulative voting (for example, by attaching several stickers as they want within given numbers). Then, group members are shuffled after each deliberation session to avoid biases made from emotional ties with other members. At the end of the meetings, participants receive some form of compensation.

The characteristics of CDM can also be elucidated by comparing it with other mini-public methods. For example, the planning cells method ordinarily recruits more than 100 members (five persons multiplied by five deliberation groups, then multiplied by four sets equals at least 100 members [$5 \times 5 \times 4 = 100$]). When editing the citizen appraisals, executive members of planning cell events have to give serious consideration to the differences in group opinions. Comparing the judgments provided by more than 20 deliberation groups and exploring unique factors that influenced specific groups are critical tasks in making effective appraisals.

On the other hand, CDMs usually recruit fewer participants than in planning cells. Typically, around 20 to 40 participants are involved. In most cases, participants gather in one room and deliberate in groups of five or six persons all at the same time. Then, each group presents the opinions that emerged during their discussion. Lastly, participants vote individually to show their preference. (Perhaps the case of Mitaka City is an exception to some extent, as its “Town Development Discussion” via the CDM method in 2018 divided participants into three rooms and set up deliberation groups with five persons in each room. Each discussion group talked about the same issues. We could see the variance in opinions among these three rooms.) In CDMs, discussion groups of five persons usually avoid majority rule. They present several essential views, not a single, unified one. That differs from the citizen jury method, which passes judgment as to the collective opinion by voting.

2) Organizers

Most CDMs are joint ventures between junior chamber organizations and municipal governments, or independent undertakings by municipal governments. Independent research organizations rarely initiate a CDM.

Usually, collaborative steering committees with local JCI members and municipal officials govern these meeting projects. The reason why the Japanese CDMs use cooperative schemes depends on the historical paths, as discussed earlier. However, in recent years, an increasing number of municipal governments are independently holding CDMs for public hearing and public relations activities.

In most cases, an executive committee decides the program in detail, including the issues or topics to be discussed, stakeholders or specialists who give expert lectures, and the compensation rate for participants. Municipal governments can provide residents-register information to recruit participants, as well as offer financial and human resource support. JCI members also contribute financial resources, and they, along with other citizen staff, assist with logistics and write and edit official reports.

At the end of the process, an official report is offered to the mayor in an official reporting ceremony and publicized on the municipal authority's website. In planning cells, participants themselves produce their appraisal report and hold a formal press conference to announce it. In CMDs, steering organizations usually prepare official reports, including citizen appraisals.

Lastly, concerning third-party surveillance, other deliberative methods including deliberative polls, citizen juries and planning cells use independent advisory committees that exist outside the executive organization. They play a vital role in maintaining fair, unbiased deliberations. However, in most cases of CMDs, the steering organization, which is usually a joint effort between civil sector organizations and municipal governments or municipal offices themselves, build discussion programs and provide informational resources to participants.

3) Compensation

The payment amount for each participant varies greatly depending on the organizers' budget. Between 3,000 JPY to 6,000 JPY per day is typical cases. However, some cases offer local specialties or local vouchers (which are only valid for use at specific local shopping streets, for example) to participants instead of cash due to financial constraints.

4) Recruiting Participants

Random selection is an essential rule for CDMs. In contrast to citizen jury systems that

use strict quota systems for participant gender or ethnicity, CDM recruits participants mainly through random sampling of the residential register. However, more than a few CDMs' steering organizations have weighted their sampling toward the young and middle-aged population to avoid over-representation by senior persons in discussion groups.

5) Deliberation Issues

In Germany, planning cells usually hold four days of discussion on disputed policy issues such as public facility construction, and municipal by-laws or guidelines conduct these deliberations.

On the other hand, CDMs in Japan usually last one or two days and often focus on community development activities such as identifying and cultivating local attractions and are not widely used by municipal governments for evaluating public-works projects, administrative plan building, or drafting city ordinances.

Professor Toru Sato (Takasaki City University of Economics) investigated 137 CDMs held between fiscal year (FY) 2006 and FY 2010. He found just nine cases (6.6%) focused primarily on improving city by-laws or municipal plans, both of which directly influence local governments' policy. Moreover, only eight cases (5.8%) focused on public facilities or infrastructure construction (Sato 2012). Professor Sato continued his survey on 194 meetings held between FY 2011 and FY 2014, and he revealed that 37 cases (19.1%) out of 194 were for making administrative plans or city ordinances, and none were concerned with public-works projects (Sato 2016).

CDMs have rarely deliberated disputed issues such as public facility development or social integration of immigrants in their ten years of use (of course, several cities have made efforts to include sensitive topics on their discussion list).

From a legal perspective, a CDM is only an advisory or public consultation procedure; it has no formal decision-making power. However, in both the cases of Mitaka City and Shinjuku City, which we describe in the next section, municipal authorities prepared three participation methods, including CDMs, public comments, and public meetings. Both cities issued official reports that showed what kinds of opinions citizens conveyed in those three participation methods and which ideas were incorporated into the final plans or courses of projects.

As we show, the case of Shinjuku in 2011 included various propositions through public comments, public meetings, and CDMs. The Shinjuku City Office altered the plans of two projects to reflect residents' views. This modification happened only for opinions raised in CDMs. In the other case of Morioka City, citizen opinions expressed in CDM

were reflected in the basic concepts of a public facility restructuring plan. However, the conclusions did not directly instruct the detail decisions on which facilities the city did or did not eliminate.

In spite of these significant trends showing that CDMs are not used for controversial issues, several municipalities apply this method to disputed matters. We next examine several examples and plan to add more in the near future.

[Case Files]

1. Mitaka City in Tokyo metropolis

As noted, Mitaka City in Tokyo held its first official CDM in Japan on August 26–27, 2006, entitled "Mitaka Town Development Discussion 2006". The deliberation issues were the development of safety and security in local community and support for children in the city.

After the 2006 event, Mitaka City has continued to hold "town development discussions" that use collaborative approaches. The city contracts through partnership-based agreements and sets up a joint organizing committee made up of municipal junior chamber members, city officials, young member associations in local major business federations, universities located in the city, and civil society organizations to manage each discussion event.

Here is the list of Mitaka Town development discussions since FY 2006.

FY 2007: Discussion on the second revision of the third Mitaka City basic plan, which focused on resilience in disasters and programs for supporting elderly persons (October 2007)

FY 2008: Discussion about land use and construction in the Mitaka area of the outer Tokyo beltway (August and September 2008)

FY 2011: Discussion of the fourth Mitaka City Basic Plan (October 2011)

FY 2012: Discussion on revising the Mitaka City disaster prevention plan (July 2012)

FY 2014: Discussion about the land-use project for the upper portion of open space above the outer Tokyo beltway near the traffic junction in Kitano, Mitaka City (February and March 2014)

FY 2015: Discussion about the first revision of the fourth Mitaka City basic plan (October and November 2015)

FY 2016: Discussion about a detailed land-use plan for the upper portion of open space above the outer Tokyo beltway near the traffic junction in Kitano, Mitaka City (November 2016 and February 2017)

FY 2018: Discussion on the basic design for a new city government building including its chamber hall (February 2018)

2. Komae City in Tokyo metropolis

Komae City, located in the southern Tokyo metropolis, held a CDM on the utilization of the Tama River riverbed on May 31, June 28, August 2, and October 25 in 2009. The Komae deliberation meetings discussed restrictions on recreation activities and solutions for garbage problems in the Tama River riverbed. Litter and waste caused by recreation activities (especially barbecues) in the riverbeds near Izumi Tamagawa Station (on the Odakyu Line), located in southern Komae City, had become a severe nuisance for neighborhoods.

Junior Chamber International Komae proposed a deliberation meeting to the city office as a joint venture, based on the fundamental-ordinance for promoting citizen participation and civic cooperation in Komae City, and they co-hosted the conference. Professor Yukihiro Harashina (Tokyo Institute of Technology) and his lab's team members supported it.

For the deliberation days, Komae City (total population of 80,249 in 2015) sampled 1,500 people over the age of 18 from the residential register. In total, 44 citizens accepted the offer and organized discussion groups.

Komae City officials considered the results of the deliberation when drafting the by-law entitled "Ordinance to conserve the environment of Kamae City Tama River riverbed" in 2011.

3. Sagami-hara City in Kanagawa Prefecture

Sagami-hara City, the third-largest city in Kanagawa Prefecture, held CDMs on public transportation on November 4 and 10 in 2013. In the meeting, the city's road policy division asked participants on an alternative public transportation system in place of the existing public bus systems in Minami Ward to solve traffic congestion and enhance mobility effectiveness. (Minami Ward is the most densely populated area in the city.)

For the deliberation days, Sagami-hara City randomly sampled 2,500 people over the age of 16 in Minami Ward (total population: 277,408 in 2017) from the residential register. Around 40 citizens, including high school students, participated in the deliberation. They discussed which alternative public transportation system (such as light rail transit) and its new routes would meet emerging needs and solve congestion. After the group discussion and a brief reporting session, each participant individually voted for their choice of the new transportation system and its routes.

Their deliberation results were reported to the official investigation committee on the alternative public transportation system in Sagamihara City. Dr. Masaharu Ito and his Okute Planning Office, which is one of the most experienced professional support companies for community development and participatory workshop planning in Japan, supported Sagamihara City in these efforts.

4. Morioka City in Iwate Prefecture

Morioka City, the capital of Iwate Prefecture, held CDMs on public facilities on October 12 and 27 in 2013. In the high economic growth period of the 1960s and 1970s, Japanese municipalities strived to build new public facilities to respond to increasing population and density and to modernize residents' lifestyle as outlined in national government policy. However, in the 2000s, Japan started to depopulate due to aging and declining birth rates. The financial burden of maintenance and rebuilding costs, combined with conflict from eliminating old facilities, became severe problems for local communities to confront.

In 2014, The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications of the national government officially asked each municipality to create a "public facilities comprehensive management and restructuring plan". It began providing financial support for these planning costs. Also, under an amendment to the Local Government Finance Act, the national government allowed municipalities to issue local public bonds to eliminate old facilities.

The "Morioka citizen deliberation meeting for our future public facilities" was co-hosted by Morioka City and Junior Chamber International Morioka to figure out residents' opinions and raise public awareness on public faculties restructuring (i.e., decreasing the total amount) in response to depopulation. The Morioka City Office held the meeting in the early stage of consideration for its "Public facilities comprehensive management and restructuring plan."

For the deliberation meeting, Morioka City sampled 3,000 people over the age of 18 from the residential register (total population of 295,339 in 2018). The organizing committee selected 44 participants after sorting from 134 citizens who accepted offers. Organizers made an effort to construct well-balanced discussion groups based on age from teenagers to seniors over the age of 80. Participants not only listened to lectures by specialists but also attended inspection tours of public facilities, including local dwelling houses, on the deliberation days. Then, they discussed how city officials and citizens should manage the elimination of public facilities.

In December 2013, an official report that included discussion results and several

policy proposals was submitted to the mayor and distributed to all city assembly members. After the official reporting ceremony, the Morioka City Office held a symposium and several public meetings at the ward level for more public involvement. Also, the city office tried coordinating the interests or conflicts of stakeholders. In 2016, the Morioka City Office had created its restructuring implementation plan for each public facility.

5. Shinjuku City in Tokyo Metropolis

Shinjuku City, which is famous for its economic vitality and ethnic diversity in Japan, held a CDM on the Second Municipal Implementation Plan on October 22 and 23 in 2011. Japanese municipal governments use a planning system typically recognized as having a three-tiered structure: Fundamental initiative, Master plan, and Implementation plan.

The implementation plan lists all projects in which the municipal offices strategically invest its resources and sets out the specific administrative operations, including the necessary organizational resources (such as revenue, personnel, and organizations), as well as the project duration and concrete numerical targets (Ohsugi, 2010). Implementation plans usually have three-year terms and are not only revised triennially but also reviewed each fiscal year for budgeting.

In the Shinjuku CDM, participants discussed their priorities among 19 projects that the municipal office proposed for inclusion in its implementation plan and the investment of public resources. Its origin was Mayor Hiroko Nakayama's campaign pledge when running for a third term that the city should screen its projects through a participatory appraisal process.

For the deliberation meeting, Shinjuku City set up a steering committee chaired by Kenichi Kobari, director of the CDPN. The committee members included Shinjuku City officials (policy coordination section), Sumio Yoshida (CDPN), and Motoki Nagano (Tokyo Metropolitan University). Moreover, the city office, via competitive bid, outsourced the logistics and secretarial work for preparation to MachiPot, an approved specified nonprofit corporation that is one of the most experienced intermediary organizations in Tokyo.

For the deliberation days, Shinjuku City sampled 1,200 people (including foreign residents) over the age of 18 from the residential register (total population of 258,771 in 2011). The steering committee selected 55 participants after an open drawing from 94 citizens who accepted offers.

In each deliberation session, municipal officials (section managers) first explained the project. Residents discussed in small groups (of 4–5 persons each), and the

representatives of each small group shared the kinds of diverse opinions (not just their conclusions) that arose in discussion. Then, participants individually completed an answer sheet on their appraisals and judgments. Participants evaluated projects by three items using a four-point scale: (1) the necessity of the project, (2) the urgency of the project, and (3) the adequateness of the proposed implementation. Also, participants judged whether to (1) escalate/enlarge the project; (2) maintain the proposed plan; (3) reduce/shrink the project; or (4) stop/abolish the project.

After finishing the deliberation meeting and policy coordination process within the city office, they significantly changed two projects out of 19 from the original plan. One was the project "Enhancing Support for Employment Promotion." The official report by Shinjuku City (Shinjuku City Office 2012) said that "[b]ecause many participants in the conference voted to 'reduce' or 'abolish' the project, the city officials decided to revise the plan to consolidate consultation services and review the service provider systems." Another altered project was entitled "Restructuring the Disaster Information System." The official report said that "[b]ecause many participants in the conference voted to 'escalate' the project, the city officials decided to enlarge it and newly start the Disaster Victims' Life Reconstruction Support System in FY 2012 and 2013."

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