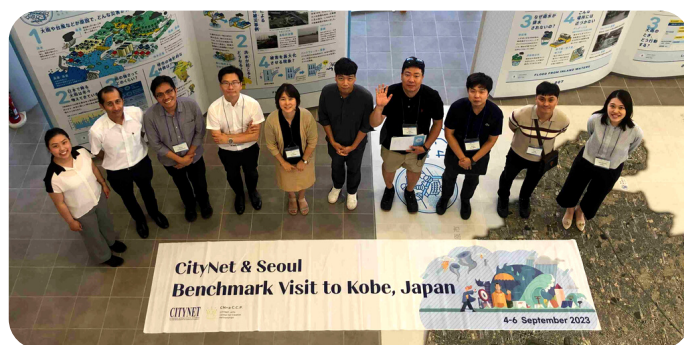




The northern cityscape is framed by the lush Rokkō mountains

1. CITYNET-PLUS ARTS HOSTS DISASTER PREPAREDNESS STUDY VISIT

From September 4 to 6, the CityNet-Plus Arts Kobe office hosted a study visit focused on local disaster preparedness measures and initiatives for a delegation comprising representatives from Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG), CityNet Yokohama Project Office, and members of the CityNet Secretariat management team.



During the 3-day program, participants were introduced to various stakeholders involved in disaster preparedness work through tours of two educational facilities, the **Sakai City General Disaster Prevention Center** and the **Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institution (DRI)**, along with information sessions with the **Kobe City Crisis Management Office** and **Plus Arts**. These organizations exemplify the distinct yet collaborative roles played by government agencies, NPOs, and private sector actors in disaster risk reduction, including disaster prevention education, and demonstrate the unique competencies and resiliency developed by a society that is critically impacted by natural disasters.



Discussing Kobe's 2025 Vision including disaster prevention

The study visit served as a benchmarking activity for the SMG delegates and provided a valuable opportunity for exchanging best practices and discussing disaster prevention solutions and challenges within the different local contexts of Seoul and Kobe.

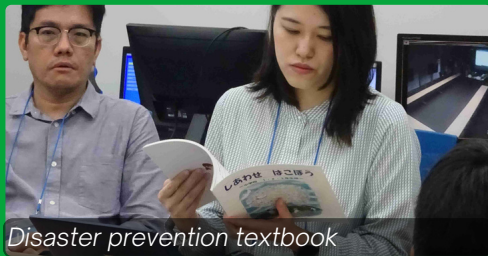
Due to its susceptibility to natural hazards and experience of past tragedies like the **1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake**, the city of Kobe has emerged at the forefront of disaster prevention education. CityNet-Plus Arts aims to further develop and improve this study visit program to promote effective knowledge-sharing among the CityNet network.



Pillar destroyed in the 1995 disaster



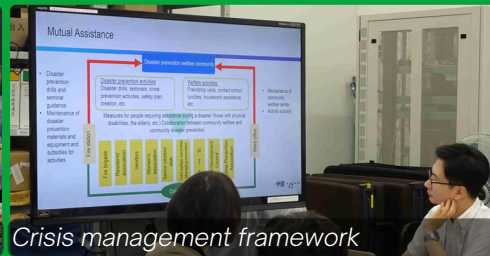
Disaster information room



Disaster prevention textbook



Lifestyle guides for every district



Crisis management framework

2. KOBE CITY CRISIS MANAGEMENT

A highlight of the study visit was a presentation by Kobe City's Crisis Management Office that explained Kobe's crisis management system and disaster prevention efforts, including flood countermeasures and public awareness-building.

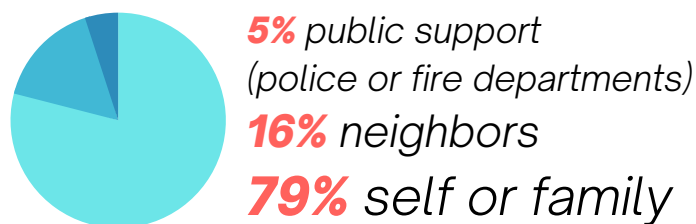


Since its establishment in 2012, the **Crisis Management Center (CMC)** has expanded to 54 staff members with the increasing role of the crisis management department in public safety governance. In emergencies, the CMC will function as Kobe's disaster response headquarters. The presentation outlined the CMC's emergency response procedure, including detailed plans of staff deployment and lines of communication; evacuation criteria and protocols; emergency shelter operations; and city stockpile management.

A key lesson from the Great Hanshin Earthquake is the necessity of citizens' capacity for **self-help** and **mutual assistance** during the initial stages of an emergency when government support is limited or unavailable. This underscores the importance of disaster prevention awareness and education. The department works to increase public awareness through mechanisms such as the interactive online hazard map; Lifestyle Disaster Prevention Guides (updated and distributed annually to every household); local talk sessions; and disaster prevention expert outreach in higher-risk neighborhoods.

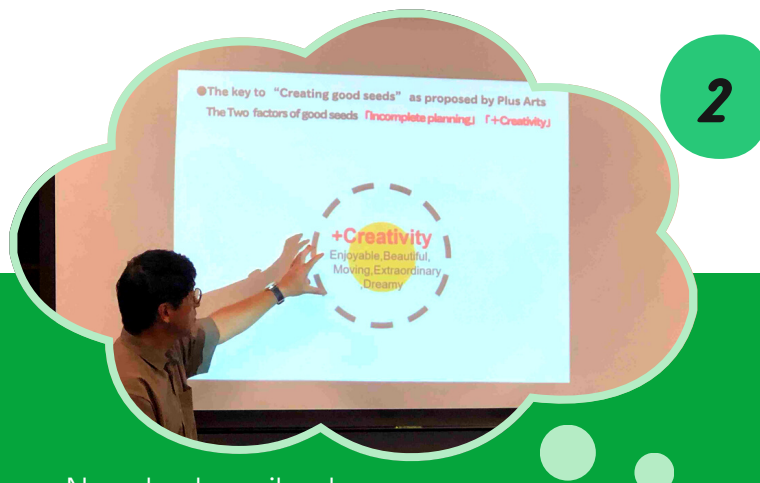
Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake

How survivors were rescued from collapsed buildings



3. CREATIVITY IN DISASTER PREVENTION

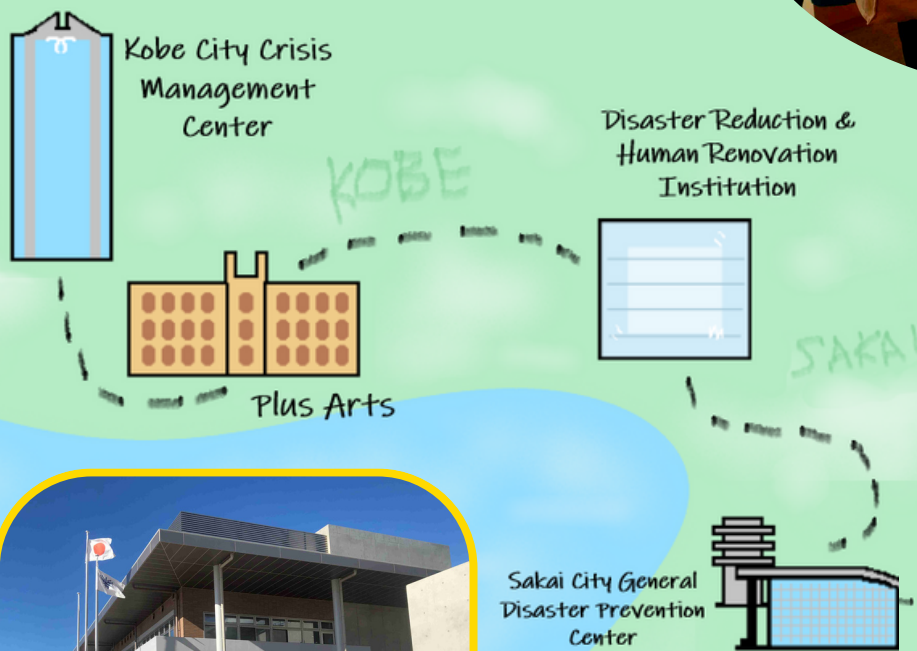
In another session, **Plus Arts** Chairperson Hirokazu Nagata described his founding philosophy for producing and delivering effective disaster education programs: “**+creative**” and “**incomplete planning**”.



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This concept of disseminating disaster prevention education through creative design and community participation was also evident in the educational facilities that the delegates visited, where practical disaster prevention education is presented in an interactive and memorable way. These learning facilities not only appeal to children and families but are also used for office team building or training activities.

The **DRI MUSEUM** uses a storytelling approach to showcase the memories of and lessons learned from the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. Through dramatic films, artifact displays, interactive exhibits and demonstrations, visitors gain an appreciation for the impact of the earthquake and a sense of urgency for disaster preparedness, in addition to acquiring scientific and practical disaster and survival knowledge.



SAKAI CITY GENERAL DISASTER PREVENTION CENTER

is built on real training grounds of the Sakai City Fire Department and offers free tours and disaster training courses using advanced simulation equipment. Some learning activities are gamified to boost engagement from children. The facility, complete with a stockpile warehouse, is also designed to serve as a base for disaster response during emergencies.



BOSAI TIP OF THE MONTH

During an emergency when water is very precious, cover dishes with disposable plastic wrap so they can stay clean without washing. This is an example of how common household items can be used for survival.

SAKAI CITY GENERAL DISASTER PREVENTION CENTER



The disaster simulator showed two types of earthquakes, a flood surge, and reproduced the seismic wave pattern of the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake.



The displays in the information area show different types of disasters situations and countermeasures. These exhibits were designed by Plus Arts.



Delegates were instructed on how to navigate and evacuate a smoke-filled room.



The Sakai Center was the first firefighter training facility in Japan to offer public tours and disaster prevention education.



4. CITYNET-PLUS ARTS WELCOMES NEW INTERN

Cheery Wang, a fourth-year business student at the University of Victoria, is excited to join CityNet-Plus Arts for Fall 2023 as part of a Center for Asian Pacific Initiatives program. She is passionate about sustainable development and social entrepreneurship and looks forward to learning.

MORE PHOTOS OF THE STUDY VISIT

