

30th
anniversary

Morioka International Relations Association

30th Anniversary publication of the foundation

30 years of progress



MORIOKA INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ASSOCIATION

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Greetings

Morioka International Relations Association

Chairman

Hideki Kamata



We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude for your constant understanding and collaboration in operating the Morioka International Relations Association.

To mark the 30th anniversary of our establishment, we have decided to release a commemorative magazine that reflects on our achievements and lays the foundation for the future growth of the Association.

Since being established in November 1992, the Association has been advancing numerous initiatives, such as the dissemination of multilingual information, volunteer training, giving various lectures, and offering a study tour for junior high school students in Victoria, Canada. These efforts aim to foster international understanding and cooperation among citizens, fulfilling the Association's purpose and contributing to making Morioka "A Globally Appealing City Open to the World."

I would like to once again express my profound gratitude for the cooperation of Morioka City, the Iwate International Association, as well as numerous international exchange organizations and individuals during this time.

Since the establishment of the Association, the number of foreign residents in Morioka has risen by approximately 800 people and now exceeds 1,700 people. While the foreign resident population in Morioka stands at approximately 0.6% of the total population, which is lower than the national average, you may have noticed that interactions with foreign residents in daily life, both in the community and as visitors, have become increasingly common.

The past 30 years since the Association's inception have been characterized by significant changes in lifestyle and dramatic shifts in societal circumstances. This includes the recent emergence of new infectious diseases.

Despite these challenges, the Association remains committed to adapting to the changing times and being a valuable resource for the community. We will continue to work towards our founding goals and strive to be a respected and indispensable organization.

To end my greeting, I respectfully ask for your sustained support as the Association moves forward with its future plans.

Congratulatory Note

Morioka City, Iwate Prefecture

Mayor of Morioka City

Hiroaki Tanifuji



I would like to extend my warmest congratulations on the Morioka International Relations Association's 30th Anniversary. I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all those who have worked tirelessly to advance international exchange in Morioka throughout the years.

Our city has seen a growth in citizens' knowledge and their appreciation of internationalization through initiatives such as our sister city partnership with Victoria, Canada established in 1985, and hosting the FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Morioka and Shizukuishi in 1993. Recognizing this trend, the Association was founded in 1992 with the goal of creating "Morioka: A Globally Appealing City Open to the World." Over the past 30 years, the Association has been instrumental in advancing international exchange in the city through initiatives such as study tours in Victoria for junior high school students, cross-cultural exchange courses, and volunteer training.

Recently, along with the cooperation of other related international exchange organizations and citizens, city has achieved even greater successes, such as concluding a friendship exchange agreement with Hualien, Taiwan in November 2019, serving as a Host Town for Canada's national teams during the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, as well as the Host Town project with the Republic of Mali. I would like to once again express my appreciation to all those involved for their hard work and efforts.

With an increasing number of foreign residents in Morioka, it is imperative to create an inclusive environment for them to live in, participate in the community, and for us to implement multicultural policies. I eagerly await the Association's future initiatives.

I look forward to your continued efforts in promoting international exchange and multicultural policies in our city. I would like to extend my best wishes for the growth and success of the Morioka International Relations Association, and for the health and well-being of all.

Congratulatory Note

Iwate International Association

Chairman

Atsushi Horie



Congratulations on the 30th Anniversary of the Morioka International Relations Association. My warmest wishes go out to you on this momentous occasion.

I would like to express my utmost admiration for Chairman Hideki Kamata and all the members of the Association for the significant role you have played in advancing international exchange in Morioka City and Iwate Prefecture as a whole, ever since the organization was established in 1992.

I also want to express my sincere congratulations to all those who have been recognized for their longstanding dedication to fostering international exchange in Morioka.

Apart from engaging in active exchanges with sister cities Victoria, Canada and Hualien, Taiwan, your association has played a significant role in fostering a global perspective among citizens by providing foreign residents and guests with opportunities to experience Japanese culture and organizing diverse courses on cross-cultural and international understanding. Your contributions in this regard are highly commendable.

Undoubtedly, the past two years must have been challenging for you as the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a dearth of opportunities for international exchange and necessitated a departure from your original plans.

At present, the limitations on entries from overseas are being lifted, and it is anticipated that there will be a surge in the number of inbound travelers, foreign workers, and foreign students in Iwate. Furthermore, as globalization continues to advance in our prefecture, Japanese and foreign residents, as members of the same community, are expected to exhibit their unique strengths, show mutual respect, and collaborate in creating a comfortable and delightful living environment in Iwate.

It is our hope that Morioka will continue to expand its international exchange and cooperation activities across a diverse array of domains, leveraging its local attributes such as its history, culture, and food, and play an active role in establishing “Morioka: A Globally Appealing City Open to the World.”

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to you on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Morioka International Relations Association, and offer my heartfelt wishes for your continued good health and success in all your future endeavors.

Message

Victoria City, Canada

Mayor of Victoria

Marianne Alto



As Mayor of the city of Victoria I'm thrilled to extend my congratulations to the Morioka International Relations Association on their 30th anniversary. The twin city relationship between Victoria and Morioka is very special to all of us. For decades our cherished partnership has provided meaningful opportunities for our residents in both cities to learn and gain exposure to the beautiful traditions of Japanese culture. At the heart of these opportunities has been the grass roots efforts of the Morioka International Relations Association for who are best known for coordinating the annual Morioka Junior High School Visits to Victoria.

Over the years what has stood out most for me about the Twin City program is the person to person friendships that form through our work. I know that for everyone involved with MIRA that those friendships and memories are irreplaceable. Its unfortunate that the pandemic has prevented a meaningful in person exchange from happening over the last two years, however, Im thrilled that the students visits have continued through online exchanges filled with plenty of learning, laughter, and fun. Once gain congratulations on your 30th anniversary. We are so thankful for your work and for the generosity of the Morioka International Relations Association. Finally, congratulations to everyone associated with our twin city program on 37 wonderful years of collaboration. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

Message

Hualien City, Taiwan

Former Mayor of Hualien

Wei Chia-Hsien



Greetings to everyone in Morioka, I am Wei Chia-hsien, the Mayor of Hualien.

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on the 30th anniversary of the Morioka International Relations Association. This is a remarkable milestone that reflects the hard work and dedication of everyone involved.

Our exchange program began with the Morioka float, and I have personally participated in the Morioka Autumn Festival twice with members of Hualien City Hall. As I walked along the festival route, I was deeply impressed by the enthusiastic welcome from the spectators. It was evident that the people of Morioka deeply cherish their history and culture. I also felt that preserving local culture is a vital element in the development of a city and is a cultural asset that cannot be replaced.

Hualien and Morioka became friendship cities in November 2019. In 2020 and 2021, we constructed a monument in each of our respective cities to celebrate our friendship exchange and symbolize the enduring bond between us.

We have high hopes that the relationship between our two cities will continue to flourish through sustained exchange between our respective governments and private organizations in the realms of culture, arts, and sports, and by enhancing our mutual understanding.

Finally, I would like to offer my congratulations once more to the Morioka International Relations Association on the occasion of its 30th anniversary.

I wish you continued growth and success.

各位朋友大家好，米纳桑抠尼鸡挖（日文大家好），我是花莲市长魏嘉贤！

首先，祝贺「盛冈国际交流协会」成立满 30 周年，这是多么令人高兴而且是难能可贵的大事。

花莲市与盛冈市通过山车游行开始了交流，我两次带着公所同仁前往参加了八幡宫山车秋祭庆典，充分感受到现场群众的热情欢迎及这座城市对历史文化的重视，也印证了文化传承对于城市发展是相当重要的，是非常珍贵的文化资产。

花莲市与盛冈市在 2019 年 11 月缔盟友好城市，两地在 2020 年及 2021 年分别打造了纪念两市友谊的地景艺术装置，象征彼此友谊恒久不变。

我期盼未来无论在政府或民间团体都能在文化、艺术及体育等方面，继续交流互访与合作，让双方更加认识彼此，两座城市之间的关系能发展得更远。

最后，祝福「盛冈国际交流协会」成立满 30 周年，未来在国家事务上更蓬勃的发展。

Message

A member of the 24th Morioka Students
Delegation Program to Victoria, 2017

Kaya Nakamura

Congratulations on the 30th anniversary of the Morioka International Relations Association. The study program in Victoria was a pivotal moment in my life. My experience as a delegate was really a defining moment for me. I previously only had knowledge of my school and home, but through this program, I came to realize that the world is much more vast than I had imagined. This experience showed me that I had a lot to learn about both my hometown and myself, things that I had previously taken for granted. I now live by myself away from Morioka, but my experience during the program and the connections I made with my fellow students gave me the confidence to pursue my studies independently in a new place. Gaining firsthand experience in a new world by venturing out on your own is a valuable experience that shapes you, regardless of the outcome or exact content. I hope that each of you who will participate in the Victoria delegation program will have wonderful experiences and make meaningful connections.



Delegates reuniting at the Morioka Coming of Age ceremony in 2023. (Nakamura is in the center front.)

30th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony and Social Event

Commemoration Ceremony

On November 14, 2022, a commemoration ceremony was held at Odette Hall to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Morioka International Relations Association. The event was highly successful, attracting a large number of supporting members and other interested individuals.

During the ceremony, Mayor Hiroaki Tanifuji of Morioka and President Atsushi Horie of the Iwate International Association delivered congratulatory speeches. Additionally, congratulatory video messages were received from Mayor Marianne Alto of the sister city Victoria, Canada, and Mayor Wei Chia-hsien of the friendship city Hualien, Taiwan.

During the commemorative lecture, Mr. Shigeru Fujii, President of the Nitobe Foundation, delivered a 90-minute presentation titled “International Exchange as Seen in the works of Inazo Nitobe,” which provided insights into not only the history of the Association but also the foundation for international exchange laid by previous generations.



Awards were presented to three individuals who have played a significant role in advancing international exchange as officials of the Association, with the aim of realizing the goal of creating “Morioka: A Globally Appealing City Open to the World.” (Mr. Takeda was unable to attend due to personal reasons.)

Mr. Hiroshi Miura (Former President of the Morioka International Relations Association) From 2006 to 2018

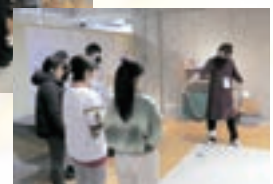
Ms. Miyako Hatanaka (Former Councilor of the Morioka International Relations Association) From 2002 to 2022

Mr. Takao Takeda (Former Councilor of the Morioka International Relations Association) From 2014 to 2022

Commemorative Social Event

On January 21, 2023, the Morioka International Relations Association organized a social event at the planet Morioka BASE STATION to commemorate its 30th anniversary. The event was centered around the theme of “Let’s Learn, Listen, and Socialize with Foreign Residents!”

In the first part of the event, the City Strategy Office of Morioka City presented information on policies related to immigration and resettlement. In the second part, an online lecture was given by Dr. Oussouby Sacko, a former president of Kyoto Seika University, with the title “Toward a Truly Diverse Society.” In the third part of the event, foreign residents hailing from diverse countries were invited to give lectures and engage in cultural exchanges through games and activities from their respective nations.



- Thailand: Stairs and Snakes
- Vietnam: Ô Ân Quan
- Taiwan: Diabolo
- Canada: Charades
- Korea: Gonggi
- Japan: Paper Sumo

Morioka International Relations Association since 2012

■ World Street Food Village in the disaster-affected areas (2011-2014)

Foreign students and other foreign residents took part in the event and prepared dishes from different countries, which were then served to individuals residing in the coastal areas affected by the disaster. Along with the food service, a singing contest was also organized.

2011: Yamada, 2012: Otsuchi, 2013: Miyako, 2014: Kamaishi



■ Host Town project (2016-)

Morioka was chosen as the Host Town for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in December 2016, with Canada as the partner country. Mali was also added as a partner country in August 2019.

A skills training course for volunteer interpreters was conducted in 2019 to coincide with the arrival of the Rugby Canada national team.



2012

20th anniversary of the establishment of the Association

2013

20th Morioka Delegation Program to Victoria

2014

Became a public interest incorporated foundation (April)
Facebook page launched

2015

30th anniversary of sister city partnership with Victoria

2016

Selected as a Host Town for Canada for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games

2017

Developed the Morioka International Relations Association Mid-Term Plan

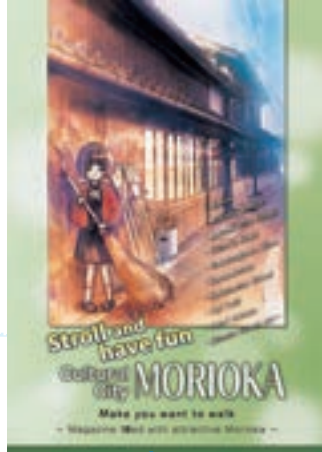
■ Taiwan Sansa

During the visit of the Taiwan Tourism and Dance Cheering Group, who participated in the Sansa Odori Parade, alumni of Morioka students delegation program to Victoria helped the group by carrying banners and flags (Participated 14 times by 2018).



■ Multicultural project

(2020) In collaboration with the non-profit organization Iwate Mirai Kiko and Morioka City, a booklet titled "Stroll and have fun - Cultural City MORIOKA" was produced and made available in multiple languages, including English, Chinese, and Vietnamese versions. (Support for NPO's reconstruction projects was provided by Iwate Prefecture.)



(2021) We collaborated with Morioka City's "Survey of Foreign Residents in Morioka" to gain insights into the issues and requirements of foreign residents in the city.



<https://www.city.morioka.iwate.jp/kurashi/1033364/1033365/1039144.html>

2018
Renewed the association's official website.

2019
130th anniversary of Morioka City attaining city status
1st Morioka International Haiku Contest
Friendship agreement was signed between Morioka with Hualien, Taiwan.

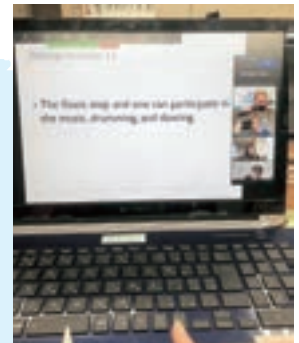
2020
35th anniversary of sister city partnership with Victoria

2022
30th anniversary of the establishment of the Association

2021

■ Projects during the COVID-19 pandemic

Interpretation and translation workshops were conducted online (Zoom) (March 2021, February-March 2022).



Foreign residents living in the city were invited to serve as lecturers, and videos showcasing dishes from four countries (Thailand, Nepal, Vietnam, and Mongolia) were shared on social media with the theme of "home-style" and "ingredients available in Morioka" (January-February 2021).

【Featured dishes】

Thailand: Stir-fried squid curry, etc.



Mongolia: Fried bread with minced meat stuffing, etc.



Vietnam: Stir-fried squid with salt, etc.



Nepal: Pilaf with butter and nuts, etc.



The annual lectures on "Separation of Garbage" for international students have been canceled and replaced with a new program. In collaboration with the Iwate Prefecture Bus Association, new instructional videos on how to get on/off the bus were created with English and Chinese subtitles and made available on our official website (November 2021).





Morioka × Victoria, Canada

Bond between Morioka and Victoria, Canada - Bridge Across the Pacific

History of the sister city exchange with Victoria, Canada

On May 23, 1985, Morioka City and Victoria, Canada officially became sister cities, with then-Mayor Daizo Ota of Morioka and then-Mayor Peter Pollen of Victoria signing the partnership agreement. This relationship was founded on the shared history of Dr. Inazo Nitobe (1862-1933), an internationalist born in Morioka, who served as Deputy Secretary General of the League of Nations and died in Victoria at the Royal Jubilee Hospital after attending a conference in Banff, Alberta, of the Institute of Pacific Relations.

The sister city agreement with Victoria has brought the world closer to many of our citizens, and has led to more active exchange not only with our sister city of Victoria, but also with many other cities in Asia and other countries.

This growing awareness of internationalization among citizens led to the success of the 1993 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Morioka and Shizukuishi, a major step toward our association's goal of creating "Morioka: A Globally Appealing City Open to the World."



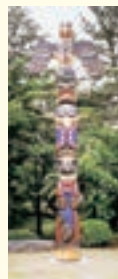
Monument in Nitobe Memorial Garden in the Royal Jubilee Hospital (donated in 1986)

Totem pole to symbolize Victoria-Morioka friendship and sugar maple tree

A totem pole in the Morioka Castle Site Park was donated to Morioka in June 1995 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the sister city partnership between Morioka and Victoria. The totem pole was donated to Morioka by the Victoria-Morioka Friendship Society on behalf of the citizens of Victoria, and was erected in Morioka by a delegation led by Victoria Mayor Robert Cross and many local Morioka citizens.

The totem pole features an eagle at the top, which is considered a high-status emblem that symbolizes power, status, and wealth. The eagle's grasp of the salmon represents the important role that salmon plays as a food source for the people of the Pacific Rim. In the middle of the totem pole, there is a statue of a chief welcoming visitors, which represents the aspirations of Dr. Inazo Nitobe for world peace as a bridge across the Pacific Ocean. Finally, at the bottom of the totem pole, there is a bear holding a salmon.

Sugar maple tree was also planted to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the sister city partnership.



Totem pole



Sugar maple

30th anniversary of the sister city partnership

In May 2015, Morioka and Victoria celebrated the 30th anniversary of their sister city partnership. In May, a citizens' delegation visited the City of Victoria and participated in the Victoria Day Parade. On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the sister city partnership, Morioka organized various commemorative events, including an illumination of the British Columbia Parliament Building made of PET bottles, which was set up in front of the Morioka History and Culture Museum. A Canada Victoria Fair was also held at Kawatoku, along with a photo exhibition to celebrate the anniversary. In addition, an ice hockey team visited Morioka, and a friendly match was held to further promote the relationship between the two cities.



Victoria Day Parade



Morioka Mayor Tanifuji and then-Victoria Mayor Helps sign an affirmation and shake hands, to reaffirm the 30th-anniversary of their sister city partnership.



BC Parliament Building made of plastic bottles



Ice hockey exchange

35th anniversary of the sister city partnership

Morioka City and various private international exchange organizations collaborated to establish the Executive Committee responsible for the planning of the commemorative project.

The planned trip of a citizens' delegation to Victoria in May 2020 to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the sister city relationship was unfortunately postponed due to the closure of the Canadian border and the cancellation of the "Victoria Day Parade" because of the pandemic.

Although most of the planned projects were postponed until fiscal year 2021, they were ultimately canceled due to travel restrictions in both countries, making it difficult to carry out the mutual visits.

As an alternative project, a video with the theme of manufacturing and Morioka was developed through the collaboration of five companies, aiming to expand the scope of the sister city exchanges that have predominantly been centered on cultural and sporting events and include those in the economic field.



Economic Exchange PR Video Thumbnail



Morioka City Official YouTube Channel Video Playlist for Economic Exchange Promotion

Morioka × Hualien, Taiwan

Ties between Morioka and Hualien, Taiwan: History of Friendship

About Hualien

Hualien is located in the eastern part of Taiwan with an area of 29.41 square kilometers and a population of approximately 101,000. Apart from serving as the administrative center of Hualien County, the city is a significant transportation hub in Taiwan, as it houses the Port of Hualien - one of the four primary ports in the country, and Hualien Airport.

Hualien City is situated amidst the Central Mountain Range and the Pacific Ocean, offering breathtaking natural beauty. The city enjoys a mild temperature even in mid-winter, with a minimum of 15 to 16 degrees Celsius. In summer, the city is known as "the sunniest city in Taiwan" due to the bright sunshine.

Hualien City is known for its production of marble and rhodonite, and it is among the largest producers of them in the world. The city has used marble to make benches and sidewalks, adding to the unique character of the city. Being the transportation hub for Taroko Gorge, one of the most scenic spots in Taiwan, Hualien City draws a significant number of tourists.



Location of Hualien

Exchanges to date

- November 2000 An exchange was triggered in November 2000, when materials related to the Morioka float garnered attention at the Taipei International Travel Fair.
- September 2001 Director of Taiwan Visitors Association and his delegation visited Morioka to observe Morioka Autumn Festival.
- November 2002 A Morioka float participated in "Hualien Tourism Day" parade.
- August 2003 Hualien County Vice Magistrate and his delegation visited Morioka to observe the Morioka Sansa Odori Festival.
- August 2004 Hualien Tourism Promotion Group and Performing Arts Troupe visited Morioka and participated in Sansa Odori Festival.
- November 2007 A Morioka float took part in the 2007 Hot Springs Festival, Morioka Float parade, where it was warmly received by the crowds lining the roadside.
- November 2016 A Morioka float took part in the Hualien Hot Spring Festival Morioka Float parade
- May/June 2018 City council members and city employees, Morioka float promotion group, and city fire brigade sent donations to Hualien County for the 2018 Taiwan Hualien Earthquake.
- September The Hualien exchange delegation arrived in Morioka and participated in Morioka Autumn Festival.
- June 2019 Hualien County government delegation visited Morioka.
Hualien County Magistrate visited tourist and welfare facilities in Morioka.
- September Hualien City delegation visited Morioka.
Hualien Mayor and his delegation participated in Morioka Autumn Festival.
- November Friendship agreement was signed between Morioka with Hualien.
A Morioka float participated in the Hualien Pacific Hot Spring Festival parade, where the Morioka Sansa Odori Sawame Shishi Odori dance was performed. The Morioka Apple Fair was held in conjunction with the festival.
- May/June 2020 Morioka received a donation of 30 face shields and 2,500 surgical masks from Hualien City in support of the efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.
- November A monument was erected in a park in Hualien to commemorate the first anniversary of the friendship city partnership.
- November 2021 A monument was erected in Morioka.
- September 2022 Hualien City delegation arrived in Morioka and participated in Morioka Autumn Festival.
- February 2023 Members of the Morioka City official delegation and the Morioka-Hualien Friendship Association visited Hualien.



Signing the friendship agreement



Parade in Hualien 2019.11



Parade in Morioka 2022.9

Monuments erected in both cities

In celebration of the first anniversary of the friendship city partnership between Morioka and Hualien, a monument was erected in a city park in Hualien City. The monument, named "Liang Xiang Hao," which translates to "good both ways", symbolizes the coming together of Morioka and Hualien, and represents the shared joy and happiness experienced during their meeting. On November 26, a ceremony was held in Hualien to celebrate the first anniversary of the partnership and the unveiling of the monument. The event was attended by various guests, including Mayor Wei of Hualien.

Although unable to visit the site, representatives from Morioka City participated in the ceremony through an online broadcast and were able to celebrate the completion of the monument alongside attendees.

During the ceremony, Mayor Wei of Hualien took a bite of a Morioka apple - which was gifted to Hualien City by Morioka City to mark the completion of the monument - and exclaimed, "Delicious!" This was a memorable moment that brought the two cities closer, despite being thousands of kilometers apart.

Following the monument erected in Hualien in November 2020, another monument was erected in Morioka in November 2021 to commemorate the friendship city partnership. Featuring designs of the Morioka float which initiated the exchange between the two cities and patterns of the indigenous people of Hualien, the monument has a commanding presence.



Online broadcast of the ceremony



Liang Xiang Hao
(Silver: Morioka, White: Hualien)



For more information on the monument



Monument (when Hualien City delegation visited Morioka in 2022)

Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games ~ Host Town Project ~

The Association assisted Morioka City with their role as a Host Town for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which involved organizing signing ceremonies with each athletic organization and various exchange events.

What is a Host Town?

A Host Town is a designation given to municipalities that promote human, economic, and cultural exchange and support between athletes and officials from participating countries and regions and local residents in preparation for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Due to its sister city relationship with Victoria, Canada, Morioka City was able to promote the invitation for a pre-Games training camp and was subsequently selected to register as a Host Town for Canada in December 2016.

In addition, Morioka was selected to register as a Host Town for the Republic of Mali in August 2019. The reason for the selection was due to Ms. Kazue Murakami's involvement in support activities for the Republic of Mali through the CARA - Association for the Cooperation and Rural Self-support in West Africa. Ms. Murakami is a member of Tokyo Morioka Furusato Kai and a graduate of Morioka Daini High School in Iwate.



2017

In May, the Canadian national sport climbing team visited Morioka to conduct a training camp for the IFSC Climbing World Cup Bouldering in Hachioji 2017, as well as to inspect the Olympic pre-Games training camp site. During their visit, the Canadian national sport climbing team also held a friendly exchange with local climbers. In September, the Executive Director of Water Polo Canada visited Morioka and signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the pre-Games training camp.



2018/2019

The Canadian women's national water polo team held their pre-Games training camp in June 2018, while the Canadian men's national water polo team held theirs in July-August of the same year, both taking place in Morioka. As part of their pre-Games training camp in Morioka, a friendly match was held against Japanese national team, which was attended by many citizens who watched the game. Water polo classes were also held for children.

The Rugby Canada women's national rugby 7s team held their pre-Games training camp in September 2019.

During their stay, members of the national team visited elementary and junior high schools in Morioka, where they ate school lunch with the children and interacted with them by playing with rugby balls.

At Iwagin Stadium, the Canadian national team held a friendly match with the Japan Sevens Development Squad. Additionally, a rugby clinic was held to interact with the children.



2020

The official decision to postpone the Tokyo Olympics was made in March due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Morioka City conducted a video exchange with each of the teams. Morioka City's official YouTube channel "webmorioka" features the videos that were created for the exchange.



2021

The pre-Games training camp, which had been postponed along with the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games finally took place in Morioka in July. Although the Rugby Canada 7s (men and women) and the Republic of Mali Judo team were unable to attend, the Canadian women's water polo team and the Canadian sport climbing team held their respective training camps in Morioka from July 8 to 20 and July 21 to 28. Due to restrictions on free outings and direct interaction with citizens, the teams engaged in online exchanges with elementary school students.



Awareness projects

Kids Let's Play

Starting in 1999, the program aimed to cultivate children's interest in foreign languages by organizing visits to kindergartens and nursery schools in the city. The program included activities such as teaching simple greetings in English and other foreign languages, playing body movement games accompanied by songs, and introducing the instructor's country of origin.



Kids Let's Play in 2020

Language course

An introductory course was organized specifically for individuals who were learning a foreign language other than English for the first time. So far, courses have been offered for Chinese, Spanish, German, French, and Korean.



French course in 2016



Spanish course in 2016

International exchange contest by junior high school students

To foster greater interest in international exchange among junior high school students, who will be the next generation leaders, a two-stage screening process was implemented. The first stage involved screening essays on a given theme, while the second stage involved evaluating speeches. The students who were selected from the speech contest took part as Morioka Student delegate to Victoria.



Speech contest in 2015

Study sessions for groups

English interpretation course

A course was conducted with the goal of improving the level of English interpreting skills for citizens by teaching them practical skills based on the experiences of professional interpreters. After being taught the concept of interpretation, the students practiced consecutive interpreting by listening to audio.



English interpretation course in 2019

Subsidies for international exchange projects

To encourage private organizations that continuously organize and carry out international exchange and cooperation projects in Morioka and abroad, subsidies were provided based on the guidelines. The aim was to further promote international exchange activities.

Volunteer training program (2018-)

A training session was conducted to enhance the skills and professionalism of English language volunteers in preparation for hosting Water Polo Canada's pre-Games training camp. The training session was held in conjunction with the pre-liminary training camp. During 2021 and 2022, we conducted training sessions on disaster management with the objective of providing assistance to foreign residents in case of a disaster.



Volunteer training in 2021



International exchange projects

World Street Food Village (Asian Street Food Village 2008-2013)

By showcasing their home cultures through the preparation of multinational dishes by foreign residents (including international students) and the performance of folk arts from their countries, international mutual understanding and exchange were further enhanced.



World Street Food Village in 2019

International understanding course

The course was primarily organized in collaboration with the Morioka Yuyu Daigaku college. The instructors introduced the culture, food, and language of their respective home countries as part of the course.



International understanding course in 2015

Exchange events with foreign residents (2017-)

The events were organized to provide an opportunity for exchange with foreign residents. To date, the exchange activities have included sports experiences such as curling and boccia, as well as disaster prevention training.



Exchange event with foreign residents in 2017

Cross-cultural understanding course

The instructors presented the culture and sports of their respective home countries and conducted lectures on preparing dishes from different countries. In January and February 2021, we shared videos on social media showcasing the cuisines of Thailand, Nepal, Vietnam, and Mongolia.



Cross-cultural understanding course in 2018

Japanese culture experience courses

Foreign citizens were given the opportunity to experience Japanese culture, such as yukata dressing, taiko drumming, tea ceremony, and Japanese cooking, through a series of courses.



Kimono in 2013



Japanese cooking in 2018



Karate in 2022

Programs for Promoting Sister City Exchanges

Morioka Students Delegation Program in Victoria

The study program in Victoria for junior high school students has been conducted annually since 1993. The purpose of program is to develop human resources suitable for the age of internationalization. The 29th study tour took place in 2022.

To date, a total of 373 students have participated in this program, with 357 students having visited Victoria. The program was held online in 2021 and 2022. Additionally, 88 students from Victoria have visited Morioka thus far.

*The scheduled visit in 1998 was cancelled due to circumstances in Victoria, while the visit in 2001 was cancelled in light of the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The program was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic. In 2021 and 2022, students participated in an alternative program instead of physically visiting Victoria.

The delegation program promoted international understanding and sister city exchanges through classroom experiences at the host school and life experiences with host families during homestays.



26th Victoria study tour in 2019

In 2021, the program was held online using Zoom. Ten students who took part in the International Exchange Speech Contest were selected to join the delegation. After practicing their English conversation skills, they engaged in exchange activities with people from Victoria City Hall and the Victoria-Morioka Friendship Society.

In 2022, six out of the ten students who participated in the International Exchange Speech Contest were selected to join the delegation. They engaged in an online exchange with a local high school student and participated in a two-day English camp in the city. Finally, they conducted an online courtesy visit to the Mayor of Victoria.



English camp in 2022



Online courtesy visit to the Mayor of Victoria in 2022

Overview and Background of the Association's Establishment

Overview

Name	Morioka International Relations Association
Establishment	November 16, 1992
Address	12-2 Uchimaru, Morioka, Iwate
Fundamental asset	100 million yen
Goal	The goal of the Morioka International Relations Association is to enhance global mutual understanding and collaboration among its citizens through organizing diverse international exchange and cooperation activities that utilize Morioka's history, culture, and other defining characteristics, with the objective of establishing "Morioka: A Globally Appealing City Open to the World."

Background of the Association's Establishment

The origin of the Association can be traced back to Morioka's sister city relationship with Victoria, Canada, established in 1985 and Morioka's selection as the venue for the 1993 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Morioka and Shizukuishi in 1988, which kindled an increasing desire for international exchange among its citizens. In response to this development, the Morioka International Relations Association was established on November 16, 1992, with the purpose of advancing international exchange on a local level, led by a citizens' initiative.

March 27, 1991	Morioka City created the "Morioka City Guidelines for Promoting International Exchange" based on recommendations made by the Morioka City International Exchange Roundtable.
January 28, 1992	The first meeting of the preparatory committee for setting up the Association was convened to deliberate on the fundamental plan and timeline for establishing the Association, as well as to appoint nine preparatory committee members in accordance with the "Morioka City Guidelines for Promoting International Exchange."
February 21, 1992	The second meeting of the preparatory committee was held to establish the framework of the Association's purpose and operations, and to elect nine proposers.
August 5, 1992	The first meeting of the proposers was convened to determine the establishment of the Association based on the charter, and Ippei Kono was appointed as the representative of the founder.
August 25, 1992	The second meeting of the proposers was held to finalize the act of the endowment, business plan, budget for income and expenses, and to elect the initial founding officers, including the president, vice president, and managing director.
October 13, 1992	A request was submitted to the prefecture seeking permission to establish the Association.
November 16, 1992	The prefecture approved the establishment of the Morioka International Relations Association as a private sector-led organization dedicated to promoting local international exchange.

History from 1992 to 2011

Major events

Major events hosted by the Association

Year	Major events	Major events hosted by the Association
1992	The Association was established on November 16, 1992.	
1993	FIS Alpine World Ski Championships in Morioka and Shizukuishi	“Japanese for the First Time” course (1993-1998) Citizens' Sports Day for International Exchange (1993)
1994		Junior high school students study tour in Victoria (1994-)
1995	10th anniversary of sister city partnership with Victoria	
1997	5th anniversary of the establishment of the Association	5th anniversary commemorative event A commemorative lecture and a panel discussion were held in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "International Exchange Morioka" newsletter (released in March 1998) was distributed to all households in the city.
1998		Trilingual lifestyle information magazine (1998-) Initially, the magazine was available only in English and Japanese and later expanded to include simplified Chinese, making it a trilingual information magazine.
1999		Kids Let's Play (1999-)
2002	10th anniversary of the establishment of the Association The association's official website was launched.	10th anniversary commemorative event A commemorative ceremony, a lecture, and a social event were organized. During the commemorative ceremony, certificates of appreciation were awarded to six individuals who had served as officers and made significant contributions to the management of the association since its inception. Concurrent with the event, a photo exhibition entitled "I Love This Part of Morioka" was also organized.
2003		International exchange contest by junior high school students (2003-) The event has been held since this year to raise interest in international exchange among junior high school students, who are expected to be future leaders. The students who won the Grand Prize and the Award of Excellence, as well as those who were recommended by their schools took part in the junior high school students study tour in Victoria.
2004		Japanese culture experience course (2004-)
2005	20th anniversary of sister city partnership with Victoria	
2006		Introductory language course (2006-)
2007	15th anniversary of the establishment of the Association	15th anniversary commemorative event [Part 1] Asian Fashion Show [Part 2] Noodles Slapstick Discussion [Part 3] Exhibition "Victoria as Seen by Junior High School Students"
2008		Asian Street Food Village (2008-2013)
2010	25th anniversary of sister city partnership with Victoria	Commemorative project for the 25th anniversary of the sister city partnership An exchange of citizens delegations and a study tour to Victoria for working people were held.
2011	Great East Japan Earthquake	“World Street Food Village” in the disaster-affected areas (2011-2014) A meal service featuring foreign cuisine and folk arts performances were organized in Yamada, which had been affected by the tsunami.

Board of Directors and Organization

Board of Directors

Chairman	Hideki Kamata	Chairman and Representative Director, IBC Iwate Broadcasting Co., Ltd.
Managing Director	Makoto Ohta	Director, Exchange Promotion Division, Morioka City
Director	Junnosuke Ito	Advisor, Junior Chamber International Morioka
Director	Toshikazu Kanuka	Director, International Department, Editorial Division, Iwate Nippo Co., Ltd
Director	Akiko Koshida	Manager of International Office, Student Services Division, Iwate University
Director	Masanobu Sakura	Executive Director, Morioka Sport Association
Director	Masaharu Tatsuzawa	Chairman, Tatsuzawa Education Group
Director	Takumi Mizuno	Secretary General, Morioka Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Director	Akihiro Miwa	Director, Japan External Trade Organization Iwate
Director	Kana Yamada	Associate Professor, Faculty of Policy Studies, Iwate Prefectural University
Auditor	Manabu Fujiwara	Executive Officer and Director of Head Office Sales, Bank of Iwate, Ltd.
Auditor	Susumu Nagasawa	Morioka City Accounting Manager

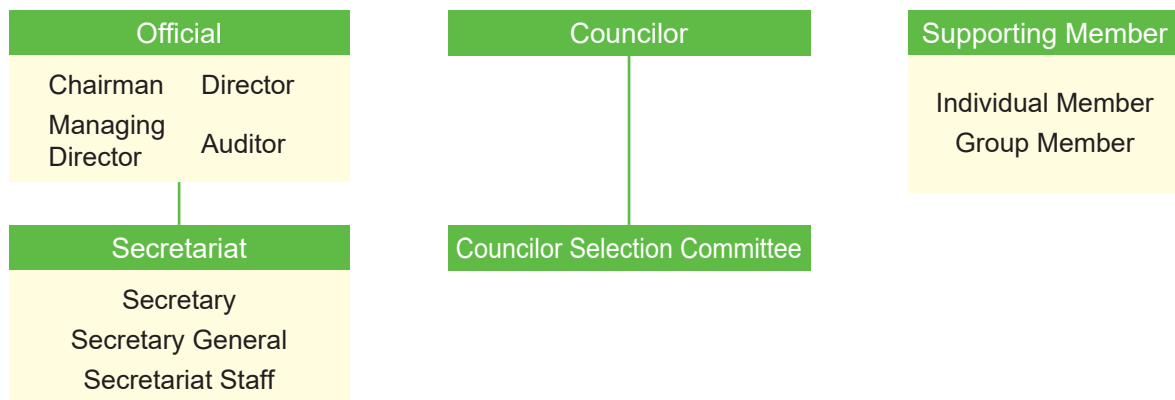
As of December 31, 2022 (Japanese alphabetical order)

Councilors

Yuriko Abe	Director, Morioka Victoria Friendship Association
Hiroyuki Ishibashi	Executive Director and Secretary General, Morioka Tourism & Convention Association
Natsumi Onaka	Professor, International Education Center, Iwate University
Isao Kawamura	Secretary General, Morioka-Hualien Friendship Association
Takae Kawamura	President, International Morioka Zonta Club
Mitsuo Takahashi	Director and Advisor, Iwate Hotel and Resort Co., Ltd.
Tomoyuki Chiba	Dean of Students and Professor at Faculty of Letters, Morioka University
Tsuyoshi Nakano	Chairman, Tamayama Area Neighborhood Association Liaison Council

As of December 31, 2022 (Japanese alphabetical order)

Organization



Data

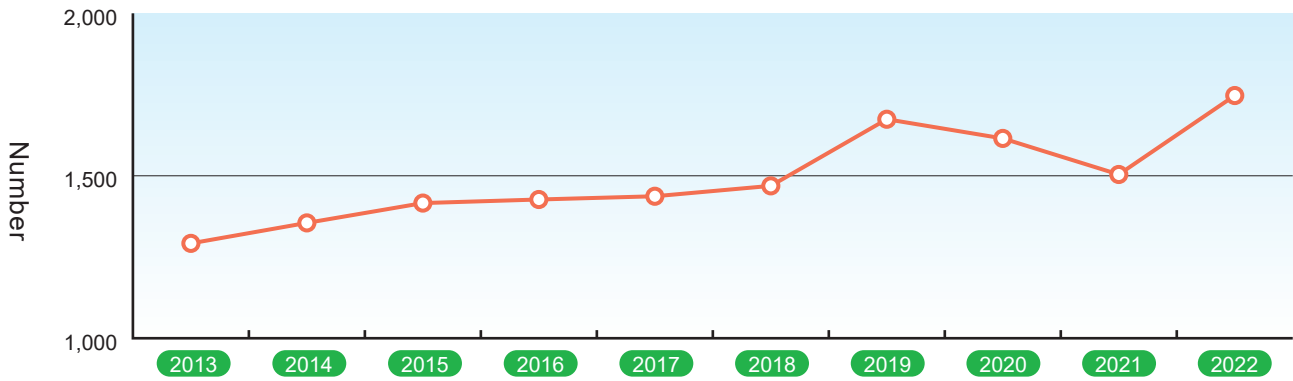
● Number of foreign residents registered in Morioka City

(Unit: Persons)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number	1,292	1,355	1,416	1,427	1,437	1,469	1,674	1,615	1,504	1,747

*As of December 31 of each year

(Source: Morioka City Citizen Registration Division)



● Number of supporting members (individuals and groups)

Year	Individual members	Group members
2012	161	19
2013	153	20
2014	126	20
2015	151	19
2016	189	19
2017	128	19
2018	146	20
2019	154	17
2020	141	20
2021	123	18
2022	103	18



Morilla, Official Mascot of the Morioka International Relations Association



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30th Anniversary publication of the foundation**

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Morioka International Relations Association