

2025 WISE in Suwa-Shiojiri, May 30-June 1, 2025

Japan Institute for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship



Japan Institute for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship (JSIE) organized Women's Initiative for Sustainable Empowerment (WISE) in Shimosuwa on May 30 – June 1, 2025 at Fushimiyatei. Supported by Shimosuwa-cho, this program is designed to promote entrepreneurship and collaboration toward innovative solutions against various social challenges related to Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs). We welcomed 27 participants from various countries, including Kenya, the Philippines, Russia, Botswana, India, Egypt, United States, Canada, and Japan. They had opportunities to shape ideas into plans through group work and to learn leadership and communication skills.

Under the theme of “Global x Inclusive x Leadership ~ Creating New Social Values for Sustainable Community,” 2025 WISE in Suwa-Shiojiri was supported by Honjin Iwanami Family, Shimosuwa-cho, Globalgiving, K.K. nabe, Persuade inc., and K.K. Guardian. We would like to express our sincere gratitude for your support.



<Tea ceremony at Honjin Iwanami>

JSIE invited innovative ideas aimed at making society better for the next generation. Participants pitched their solutions to pressing social issues on the first day, followed by a vote to select the top five ideas. Based on shared interests, five cross-border groups were formed to bring those ideas to life. Over the three-day program, group members collaborated intensively to develop their proposals. The WISE program is proudly supported by the Honjin Iwanami family, and we were honored to host a special talk session with the 28th-generation head of the Iwanami family in a beautiful Japanese garden setting.

JSIE supports fostering global talent and offers global networking opportunities for participants, including students, young and experienced professionals, with an emphasis on helping women and younger generations realize their greatest potential. The WISE program is to provide opportunities to shape our life mission and work toward social challenges.

JSIE particularly focused on the following points and asked participants to consider such principles.

- *Identify and define problem(s)
- *Present and explain your ideas to others
- *Negotiate, collaborate, and involve with others
- *Accept different values and be flexible
- *Play leadership and bring “the best outcome”

2025 WISE in Suwa-Shiojiri “Global x Inclusive x Leadership ~ Creating New Social Values for Sustainable Community” by JSIE



Ms. Shuri Fukunaga Ms. Mari Kogiso Mr. Michael Brown Mr. Daniel Cohn

Mentors played a vital role by offering diverse perspectives, posing critical questions, and encouraging participants to continue refining their plans. Ms. Shuri Fukunaga, a top PR strategist and CEO of Persuade Inc., provided insights into business risk management. Ms. Mari Kogiso shared the viewpoint of a social impact fund investor, drawing on her extensive experience with social enterprises. Mr. Michal Brown, co-founder of K.K. nabe, emphasized the importance of practicality and designing from the user’s perspective. Mr. Daniel Cohn, a health expert and CEO of Vitric Advisors, stressed sustainability and strategies for achieving meaningful impact. In addition, Caitlin Puzzar, a 2019 WISE Fellow and CEO of K.K. Guardian, introduced her SOS communication Support tool designed to detect child abuse and bullying. By learning from the mentors' journeys, participants gained valuable insights to guide the development of their own projects.

At the end of the three-day program, five teams presented their project ideas and implementation plans. Each group delivered a brilliant pitch, showcasing unique ideas shaped by their experience working in a highly diverse environment. Participants enjoyed rich & meaningful communication throughout the program. They worked tirelessly to develop sustainable mechanisms and had thoughtful discussions around the how, why, what, and when of launching new projects. The organizers are extremely proud of the high-quality project plans each team produced in such a short time.



The **Digital Innovation Award** was presented to the *Mamorikko* team for their anonymous consultation app designed to support children who experience sexual abuse. The **Best Storytelling Award** went to the *Rise a Nanny* team, which proposed a community-based ecosystem in Kenya to train and support nannies through micro-financing, aiming to improve both quality and sustainability. The **Investable Award** was given to *Heritage Beyond Generations*, a team that introduced a model for sharing the traditional tea ceremony learning path to engage younger generations. The **Best Synergy Award** went to *Minna no Ie*, a project aimed at raising awareness and addressing the shortage of foster parents in Japan. The **Nagano Special Award** was presented to the *Renew* team, which tackled the issue of population decline by proposing strategies to attract young migrant families to the region. JSIE would also like to extend heartfelt thanks to the senior helpers of Fushimiyatei for hosting the WISE program, and to *Nagano Nippo* for their valuable coverage of the event.

JSIE staff Fumiko Sasaki from NY provided keynote with life stories on mission. JSIE facilitators Hiromi Murakami and Caitlin Puzzar also joined as mentors to stimulate thinking patterns and innovative minds. The grand master Mayumi supervised entire logistics for smooth operations.



Caitlin Hiromi Fumiko Mayumi

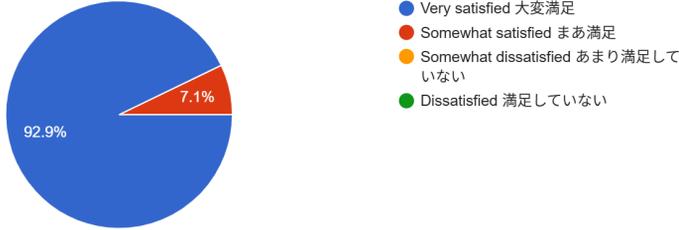
We the organizer and staff also want to thank talented Participants gathered at WISE in Suwa-Shiojiri!

Please see www.jsie.net/en for more of JSIE’s activities!

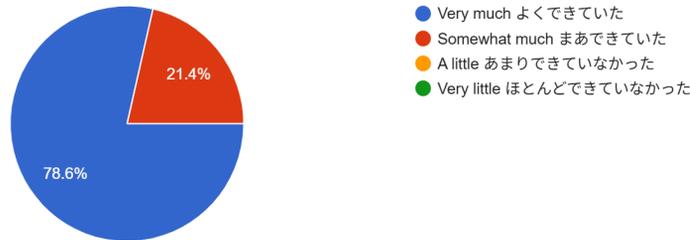


アンケート結果

1) WISE2025の満足度について教えてください。



2) ファシリテータは効果的でしたか？



Q: What you've learned from this program, and what inspired you the most during the program?

- ・ Location of stay (Masuya guest house) was very beautiful We were able to work in many different locations Able to interact with many new diverse people Mentors provided crucial advice and considerations.
- ・ たくさんの人と接する機会があり、自分の視野が広がる出来事がたくさんありました。日本の文化について学べる機会もあってすごく楽しかったです。また、メンターの方の今までの経験や大切にしていることを知ることができて充実した3日間でした。
- ・ I liked the opportunity to just create anything I want from scratch and also find people who are passionate about the same thing. I liked getting feedback from professionals.

Q: WISEプログラムで最も刺激をうけたこと

- ・ The high school students not only from Japan but also the foreign students, studying abroad is a tough experience but full of life lessons and priceless experiences that will elevate you in the future, I hope I could continue chasing precious opportunities where I can meet people who inspire me and push me forward.
- ・ いろいろなバックグラウンドを持っている人と話せたことです。自分が知っている世界はとても狭くてこのプログラムに参加してもっといろんな場所に行ったりそこにいる人と話したりしてみたいと思いました。また同じ年代の人でもリーダーシップがあつてみんなのことを考えられる人たちばかりですごく刺激になりました。自分もそんなふうになりたいと思いました。
- ・ How each person's ideas were incredibly valuable even though it may not have seemed so at the beginning.
- ・ 多様な国、多様なバックグラウンドを持った方と目的をともしたことです。特に、グループワークでそのような多様な人たちと事業案を作り上げる過程が刺激的でした。
- ・ Hearing the stories of the mentors really helped me envision what kind of life I want for myself.
- ・ The lectures and everyone else's initial pitches – inspired me to have the courage to put out my ideas

- ・ The fact that there were different age sets taught me that learning has no end and the importance of time and giving back
- ・ 活動ももちろん良い刺激を得られましたが、最初のアイスブレイクのおかげかメンバーを家族のように思うほど仲良く話せるようになったことな特に良かったです。
- ・ The brainstorming sessions were also great and it taught me that everyone has some input to the greater goal.
- ・ The mentorship sessions also were great it gave me hope that there is someone out there who can listen and embrace my idea after all.



スタッフより御礼！詳細はこちら www.jsie.net をご覧ください。またの参加をお待ちしております！