



## 2021 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

**Title of the Story:** The Kamaishi Open Field Museum Concept

**Destination Name:** Kamaishi

**Country:** Japan

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**Nomination Category:** *(Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)*

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- ☐ Localizing the destination supply chain
- ☐ Decarbonizing the destination supply chain
- ☒ Culture & Communities
- ☐ Environment & Climate
- ☐ Nature & Ecotourism
- ☐ Tourism Reset & Recovery

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*Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.*

## Issues faced

The Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011 caused tremendous damage to the city of Kamaishi, resulting in the loss of many precious lives and properties. The number of dead or missing reached 1,040, and the number of evacuees went up to 9,883.

In 2017, six years after the Great East Japan Earthquake, the city of Kamaishi established the "Kamaishi City Tourism Vision" as a 10-year plan that outlines the guidelines for a new tourism strategy with the aim of pushing forward the reconstruction of the city's heavily damaged areas.

At the time for the city, one of the most critical objectives was to bring back the pride of the citizens in living in this city again after facing the great difficulty of the disaster.

Therefore, as part of the main pillars of the policies, the new "Kamaishi City Tourism Vision" aims to design citizens' participation in tourism through which they, as hosts, can revisit the beauty of the local living, culture and nature and to revive the pride of living in the area. The concept "Kamaishi Open Field Museum" was, then, established as a means of realizing this policy. It views the entire city of Kamaishi as an open-air museum, and each citizen of Kamaishi as a guide, telling stories about the beauty of the city.

## Methods, steps and tools applied

In the Kamaishi Open Field Museum project, we consider not only the natural and cultural heritage of Kamaishi City, but also the daily livings of Kamaishi citizens as an important local tourism resource. We worked to develop a series of one-of-a-kind attraction experience programs that each Kamaishi citizen can offer as a guide.

For example, a fishing experience with fishermen, tree planting experience with forestry workers, craft experience at ironworks; hiking in national parks with a local guide, guided tours of the city streets, disaster prevention learning programs with the ones who experienced it, and sports programs by sports-loving citizens.

When developing a program, we carefully intend to emphasize the stories and personalities of each local guide. In this way, even with the same theme and content, a fishing experience, for example, will differ depending on which fisherman serves as a guide. Each citizen's life becomes a tourism experience, and we believe that the way such diversity offered can truly be an attraction as a series of tourism contents.

We also hold an event "Kamaishi Open Field Museum Exposition over a few months every year," known as "Meetup Kamaishi", where the experience programs can be collectively promoted and offered both to the tourists visiting Kamaishi City during the event and the local members.

## Key success factors

In order to develop such series of experience programs that make use of the stories and characters of local citizens, it was essential to have a coordinator who would accompany each guide citizen from the planning stage. To this end, an executive committee was formed through a public-private partnership, and a systematic management system was established with the members sharing the role as a coordinator. The city of Kamaishi provides the funds for the operation of the committee, and Kamaishi DMC acts as the secretariat, coordinating the people involved and carrying out the entire project.

This committee not only develops experience programs, but also helps the guides and the committee members deepen their understanding of the vision of the Kamaishi Open Field Museum project and discuss strategies to carry it out.



### Lessons learned

The goal of the Kamaishi Open Field Museum Initiative is not simply to increase the number of programs, but also to bring up the level of involvement of Kamaishi citizens in tourism, and to raise their positive awareness of living in Kamaishi City. Therefore, the "Kamaishi Tourism Vision" defines KPI as "the percentage of citizens who are proud of the city" and "the percentage of citizens who try to attract people from outside", and progress toward these goals are measured quantitatively.

The "Meetup Kamaishi" programs, in which Kamaishi citizens themselves serve as the initiators and guides, is expected to contribute to the achievement of these KPIs.

In a survey conducted in 2020, the percentage of citizens who are proud of their city was 32%, and the percentage of citizens who try to attract people to their city was 20%, which are still quite low rated.

We need to understand the current situation as accurately as possible so that we can properly evaluate our tourism strategy.

### Results, achievements and recognitions

The exposition of the Kamaishi Open Field Museum, "Meetup Kamaishi" have continued to be held from 2017 to this year. Each time, the number of programs is gradually increased; more than 100 citizens in total have served as guides in this past four years.

Some of the programs successfully established ongoing relationships with certain outside visitors and have been receiving repeating requests, and others were asked by local elementary schools to hold their experience programs as part of classes.

### Additional references

<https://visitkamaishi.jp/>

