

DIJ Workshop



Friday, 23 January 2026, 16.00 – 18.30 (JST)

Hita Workshop: *Machizukuri* Initiatives and Adaptive Governance in a Rural Japanese City

This hybrid bilingual workshop focuses on local initiatives in response to the current challenges facing regional Japan, exemplified by the city of Hita in Ōita Prefecture. The event combines the perspectives of two scholars on this area in Northern Kyushu and one practitioner from the field. It addresses aspects of local resilience in times of disruption and postgrowth. The speakers illustrate two different revitalization approaches, displaying the merits and limitations of tourist-based *machizukuri*, or “town-making” activities. Furthermore, the workshop explores community resilience in the face of challenging times by examining the relationship between local governance structures and vigilance in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The aim of the workshop is to critically engage in a discussion about adaptation processes in rural Japan. Investigating the same region from three different angles promises a more nuanced understanding of social dynamics and societal change. After the three presentations, a panel discussion including Q&A will conclude the event.

Program (JST)

16:00	Welcoming Remarks (Sebastian Polak-Rottmann, DIJ Tokyo)
16:10-16:40	Popular Culture and Revitalization Initiatives in Hita (Timo Thelen, Kanazawa University)
16:40-17:10	Lessons from 25 Years of Community Building in Hita (Masahiko Nishioka, <i>in Japanese</i>)
17:10-17:40	Community Resilience During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Governance and Vigilance in Hita (Paul J. Kramer, LMU Munich)
17:40-17:50	Short Break
17:50-18:30	Panel Discussion and Q&A (Sebastian Polak-Rottmann, DIJ Tokyo)

The event will be held in English and Japanese. Admission is free. The three presentations will be followed by a panel discussion and Q&A session. To participate on-site, please register via email to polak-rottmann@diجتokyo.org. To participate online, please register via this [link](#). Please be aware that audio-visual recordings may be made, stored, and published during and after the event.

Deutsches Institut für Japanstudien – German Institute for Japanese Studies

Jochi Kioizaka Bld. 2F, 7-1 Kioicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0094

Tel: 03 3222 5198, Fax: 03 3222 5420