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Organizing a Competition on Tackling Youth Unemployment
若者の雇用問題に挑むコンペティションの運営

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1. Organizing the Hult Prize at Kyoto University

1.1 The Hult Prize

Founded in 2009, the Hult Prize has become the world's largest social entrepreneurship competition for university students. The Prize is a partnership between the United Nations Foundation and the Hult International Business School. Every year, the Hult Prize challenges university students to solve one of the most pressing global social issues. The winning team is announced by President Bill Clinton at the United Nations Headquarters in New York and receives $1 million in seed capital to launch a social enterprise based on their idea. Due to its entrepreneurial, social, and global nature, the Hult Prize attracts thousands of students from all over the world to help with the organization and to compete for the Prize.

1.2 Deciding to Organize the Hult Prize at Kyoto University

Throughout my student life, I have had many conversations with fellow students about our future job prospects. We always wish we could find more opportunities to work on socially relevant topics while making enough money to lead a good life. The chances of doing so always look small. It has always seemed like we can't have it all--that we must choose to accept low pay for socially engaged work, or "sell out" to a big corporation. The Hult Prize presents a rare opportunity, allowing the winners to create their own company that works on socially relevant topics.

I decided to apply to be a Hult Prize campus director when a friend of mine, Walid Yassin, told me about the opportunity. As a Monbukagakusho scholar,

I always felt that it was my duty to participate in international events in Japan. Being a campus director seemed like a good chance for me to experience organizing events in Japan. As a student in the Collaborative Graduate Program in Design, I have met many socially engaged students and worked with them on finding innovative solutions for social problems. Therefore, I was sure that many students at Kyoto University would be interested in competing for the Hult Prize and have the potential to win it. Once I became the campus director, I needed to form an organizing committee, spread the word about the event, recruit a large number of teams to compete for the prize, and find a panel of experts to make up the jury. My personal aim was to find a team of students with a highly innovative and impactful idea and help them get one step closer to winning the Hult Prize.

2. The 2019 Challenge: Youth Unemployment

The 2019 challenge was announced as "*building the foundations of a venture that will provide meaningful work for 10,000 youth within the next decade.*" The Hult Prize Foundation states two conditions for "meaningful work." It must:

1. Be paid and offer a minimum of 10 hours of employment per week.
2. Create a positive social impact.

The challenge is meant to tackle the growing problem of youth unemployment. Current figures show that youth aged 15 to 35 are three times more likely to be unemployed than older adults[i]. Along with climate change, the rise in youth unemployment is considered one of the greatest challenges of our time. If we do not address it swiftly, we risk threatening the peaceful coexistence of people in many places around the world[ii]. To address this challenge, the Hult Prize asks university students for: *"New ideas. New business models. New technologies. New mindsets."*

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[i] International Labor Organization. (2017). Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017.
[ii] https://www.equaltimes.org/the-global-youth-unemployment

3. The Hult Prize On-Campus Events at Kyoto University

3.1 Organizing the events

Kyoto University's Hult Prize organizing committee comprised four students from the Design School: Samar Helou, Kensuke Morris, Mizuha Marumoto, and Miki Kengo. When discussing potential co-sponsors for the Hult Prize on-campus event, we first thought of the Design School. In Kyoto University's Design Program, students learn how to approach social problems and find innovative solutions to tackle them. The Hult Prize naturally complements the program by offering a potential venue for Design School students to apply their skills and make their ideas a reality. Due to the nature of the event and its alignment with the vision of the Design School, our request was accepted. Consequently, the Design School provided us with the needed financial support to organize on-campus events.

3.2 The different events

In total, four events were organized: two information sessions, one team-making session, and the final competition. The information sessions provided students with information about the Hult Prize, the steps they needed to take to compete, and specifics about the 2019 challenge. The team-making session was held to help students find team members and share ideas.

4. The Final Hult Prize Event at Kyoto University

4.1 The participants'

On December 12th, 2018, eight teams competed for the Hult Prize on-campus prize at Kyoto University. The competition took place at Mizuho Hall at the Faculty of Law and Economics. Each team included three to four Kyoto University students. The teams proposed ideas to create meaningful jobs for 10000 youth in the spheres of online education, urban farming, personal data services, talent discovery, sustainable food services, and waste collection and recycling.

4.2 The jury

The panel of judges comprised five experts with backgrounds in management and consulting, business strategy, design, social activism, and business entrepreneurship:

1. Chihiro Suematsu, PhD, professor of Kyoto University's Graduate School of Management and Graduate School of Economics.

2. Dr. Wendy Lee, PhD in Cultural Anthropology, Kyoto University. Lee is the founder and CEO of many successful companies in Kyoto, including Kitayama Boueki, Kyoto Machiya Stay, and Hotel Ethnography.

3. Kya Kim, a professional peacebuilder and current director of the Peace Mask Project, an international nonprofit organization based in Kyoto that uses art as a platform for cross-cultural dialogue and conflict transformation.

4. Dr. Yusuke Kita, PhD in Architecture, Kyoto University. Kita is a lecturer of the Collaborative Graduate Program in Design at Kyoto University. His research interests include general design systems and design processes and architectural and urban planning.

5. Dr. Will Baber, Associate Professor of Kyoto University's Graduate School of Management. Dr. Baber's career has combined education with business practice and business negotiation in Europe, North America and Japan.

To choose the winning idea, the judging panel took five main criteria into consideration: (i) alignment and sustainability (ii) profitability (iii) feasibility, (iv) disruption (v) scalability.

pic.1 The jury giving feedback to the participants

5. The Winners

5.1 The winning team

The winning team, *gomiGo*, is made up of four international students studying civil engineering at Kyoto University:

· Teethat Vongvanich from Thailand,

· Nisita Pradipta from Indonesia,

· Ziad Abdelhalim from Egypt,

· and Danyel Koca from Turkey.

pic.2 The winning team

5.2 The winning idea

This year's challenge was to come up with an idea that could create meaningful jobs for 10000 youth in the next decade. *gomiGo* addresses this challenge with a recycling system specific to Indonesia that incentivizes consumers to sort their own waste, thus increasing the rate and value of recycling. *gomiGo*'s proposal employs youth from waste pickers—Indonesia's most vulnerable class—while reducing the amount of waste in Indonesian landfills.

In April 2019, *gomiGo* will compete in the regionals in Tokyo. If they win, they will join a start-up accelerator at the Hult Castle in London to improve their proposal. If they are successful in this phase, they will compete in the finals held at the UN Headquarters in New York in September 2019 for the chance to win the prize.

6. Discussion and Reflections

gomiGo, the winning team at Kyoto University, was invited to compete in the Hult Prize regionals in Tokyo this Spring. They are proposing an innovative and impactful idea and they are now one step closer to winning the Hult Prize. Knowing this, I consider that the main goal of organizing this event was successfully achieved. Nonetheless, we faced many challenges while organizing the on-campus events. In the following sections, I discuss and reflect on those challenges.

6.1 Recruiting an organizing committee

The first step was to recruit a number of student volunteers to form the events' organizing committee. At this stage, recruiting foreign students was easier than recruiting Japanese students. Possible reasons could be attributed to my low Japanese language ability, my limited personal connections with undergraduates, and the fact that the Hult Prize is more famous outside Japan. Moreover, graduate Japanese students have limited free time due to their job and study requirements and activities. In hindsight, I suppose that the involvement of Japanese undergraduates would have made the recruitment of volunteers easier. In the coming years, as the Hult Prize becomes better known in Japan, I expect that recruiting organizing committee members will become easier.

6.2 Retaining volunteers and engaging them to follow through with tasks

While organizing the events, two students dropped out of the organizing committee due to changes in their schedules. Moreover, there were many cases where members had to extend their deadlines due to previous work or study commitments. From this experience, I learned that it is important to understand why people volunteer for projects, what they expect to gain from volunteering, how much free time they can dedicate to their allotted tasks, and how they will prioritize their time. If I had come to these understandings earlier, I could have anticipated the problems I encountered and would have been better able to manage them.

6.3 Recruiting teams of Japanese students

Although the on-campus posters and flyers were distributed in both English and Japanese, six of the eight teams that participated in the final competition were made up of foreign students at Kyoto University. One possible reason could again be attributed to the fact that the Hult Prize is better known outside of Japan. Another reason could be that the social media resources were predominately in English, including the main Facebook page, the official website of the Hult Prize, and the website of the Hult Prize for Kyoto University. Although we tried to add Japanese information to the website, the template provided by the Hult Prize Organization did not allow

Japanese characters. The same problem may be faced by other Hult Prize organizers in non-English speaking countries. Future organizers could reduce the language barrier by providing more social media content in Japanese.

6.4 Proposing innovative, feasible, profitable, and scalable solutions

The judges had to consider multiple criteria when assessing the ideas presented at the competition. One criterion was the innovative and disruptive aspect of the idea. Other criteria included the proposal's feasibility, profitability, and scalability. Many Design School students may not be ready to participate in this sort of competition. In most of the design workshops we undertook, we mainly focused on finding innovative and disruptive solutions, but were rarely asked to address issues of feasibility, profitability, and scalability. In the final competition, the teams whose members had business-related backgrounds answered better to these criteria and outperformed the other teams. As for assessing the proposals, the jury members had difficulties providing accurate assessments of the ideas' feasibility. This could be due to the global nature of the problem at hand, and that the teams only had a total of six minutes to pitch their ideas.

7. Conclusion

The Hult Prize 2019 challenge was to tackle youth unemployment. Eight teams competed for the on-campus prize at Kyoto University. *gomiGo* won the on-campus competition and will go on to represent Kyoto University in the Tokyo regionals. In this article, I discussed the reasons for organizing the Hult Prize at Kyoto University. I also examined the challenges that we faced while organizing these events and considered how they could be addressed in the future.

Inquiry towards studies of design
+ What is meaningful work?
+ Why do students do volunteer work?
+ Does joining the Design School increase students' social activism?
+ Should design school students learn more about assessing the profitability, feasibility, and scalability of a solution?