Japan Arts and Homelessness Review

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by Matt Peacock MBE and Ellie Raymont, With One Voice

A Sokerissa dance rehearsal in a park in Tokyo led by Founder Yuki Aoki (left) and Kanayo Ueda, Founder of Cocoroom and the University of the Arts Kamagasaki, Osaka (right)
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1) Executive Summary

Like many countries around the world, the arts and homelessness sector in Japan is passionate, dynamic, small and fragmented. At the time this report is being written in 2017, there were six known arts projects in the country working with homeless people – from Sokerissa the dance company in Tokyo run by choreographer Yuki Aoki to Cocoroom the non-profit organisation run by poet/activist Kanayo Ueda that has gained international recognition running a University of the Arts for the residents of Kamagasaki, Osaka.

With One Voice, the international arts and homelessness movement seeks to support and connect the sector through exchanges in practice and policy. As well as a wide global reach, WOV focusses on working more closely in certain countries, particularly those hosting the Olympics where homeless people are often displaced. The last two Olympic cities, London and Rio have responded positively to the With One Voice movement and hosted events for homeless people in the Cultural Olympiad programmes.

This Review of Japan’s arts and homelessness sector follows similar reviews in Brazil, USA, Canada and Scotland. It is based on around a decade of work in Japan with the British Council and a focussed research project in March 2017 including visits to six cities, meeting 117 people across policy, homelessness, arts and people with a lived experience of homelessness1.

Government figures show around 5,534 rough sleepers across Japan (a reduction from over 25,000 in 2004)2. But as always, these figures are approximate and hide a number of factors. The street count in Tokyo (where a quarter of homeless people are found) is conducted during the day, so many rough sleepers are not there. In an initiative run by the Tokyo Institute of Technology’s ARCH project (Advocacy and Research Centre for Homelessness), students have conducted night street counts twice a year in Tokyo, finding 1,331 rough sleepers. This is 250% more than the official figures.

As is the case in most countries, the number of hidden homeless people cannot be counted. There are 19 ‘shien’ centres in 9 local authorities accommodating 1,492 people nationwide3. Typically the shien centres house 30 men for between three and six months while they look for work. What is particularly relevant to the role of the arts is that the shien centres are also known as ‘independent living’ centres which is code for ‘getting work’. Everyone we met agreed that independent living is more than just employment but there is no clear strategy currently to enable people who have left the streets or homeless centres to build social networks. Added to this, if you consider that the vast majority of homeless people are elderly, it is not surprising that there is chronic isolation and most are too old to get work.

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1 See a full list of interviewees in the Appendix
3 Figures from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, 2017
This is one of the big challenges and opportunities in supporting the arts/homeless sector – it would fit perfectly into the current national homelessness strategy. If this was done at policy level (as in Manchester through the Manchester Homelessness Charter and Greater Manchester Mayor’s Homelessness Strategy), thousands of homeless people would benefit both individually and through improved public perception. When we met the Government Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (responsible for homelessness) they hadn’t heard of any of the arts and homelessness groups we mentioned nor that a sector existed.

The message coming strongly from working in Japan is that the individual’s identity is about work in a way that is much stronger in Japan than in many other countries. ‘You have three things in your life’, one person explained. ‘Family, society and job.’ And many people talked of ‘shakai-jin’ – literally meaning ‘society-people’. In Japan, you only really ‘belong’ to society if you are ‘useful’ and have a job. This accounts for a number of homeless people genuinely choosing to live on the streets – not in the same way as many of the public think homelessness is a choice but consciously deciding to get out of a system they perceive as rigid. This attitude is evident at policy level and it is clear that homelessness is seen by policy makers and the public as an individual issue rather than a society one.

The current arts and social/arts sector want to use the arts to raise awareness of the true nature of homelessness and to encourage the public to engage with the issue. They want the public to see homeless people as human beings with skills and talents and not just a set of problems. The tide could be turning in Japan, one sign of which is the steady growth in the disability arts sector over the past 20 years. As a result of the Paralympics, a national strategy to expand the sector has seen huge investment. Every local council is funding arts/disability projects and most mainstream arts orgs are working in the field.

This is in stark contrast to the arts/homelessness movement which, like in most countries, is passionate but under-resourced. It is interesting fact that none of the projects in the field has enough money to pay any staff. Everyone doing this work has other jobs and they use small local government/trust grants to fund project costs.

Key features of the homeless (and arts/homeless) sector in Japan:
- In 2017, there are officially 5,534 street homeless people in Japan but the number of homeless population in Tokyo is based on a day-time street count. Other cities do conduct night-time counts.
- 75% of street homeless people are 55 or over
- The vast majority of street homeless people are men (97% in Osaka)
- There are six known arts/homelessness projects in Osaka, Tokyo, Fukuoka and Yokohama

The six projects working in the arts and homelessness field include Cocoroom in Osaka which has been a driving force and a catalyst for the arts/homelessness movement for a decade. Based in the district of Kamagasaki, famously one of the most deprived communities in the country, founder Kanayo Ueda has built a major programme of arts to support the residents of the Kamagasaki, most of whom are single men who live in Doyas (single rooms the size of 2-3 sleeping mats) and have experienced homelessness or are at risk. Cocoroom started as a community café
where Kanayo, a poet ran arts projects to bring people together and show Osaka a different side of Kamagasaki and its people. This has now grown into the **University of the Arts, Kamagasaki** offering a wide range of arts activities with the residents include a choir run in the local homeless hostel to art, dance and calligraphy.

The **Arts Management Centre Fukuoka (AMCF)**, set up by Yuko Itoyama, (who saw homeless people every night when she left the theatre she was running) organises drama workshops in a shien centre and hopes to expand to other areas of Fukuoka Prefecture. These drama workshops include techniques using newspapers to create scripts and stories which increase communication skills.

We also met projects in poor districts of Yokohama and Tokyo, with a similar density of day labourers and homeless people to Kamagasaki. For example, **Sanyu-kai**, a non-profit organisation in Sanya in Tokyo, runs projects that support homeless/ex-homeless people and connects them to each other and wider society. Over the past year it has launched a photography project in which participants borrow digital cameras to take photos of their neighbourhood and elsewhere in Tokyo. The photos are shared between participants at meetings and the organisers have already seen how this is beginning to lift confidence and communication skills. The next stage is to organise exhibitions to develop the programme.

Tokyo is also the home of **Sokerissa** the dance company for homeless people run by choreographer Yuki Aoki. Sokerissa was set up through support by the **Big Issue** and **Big Issue Foundation Japan** and rehearses in halls and in parks where homeless people sleep. Yuki and his troupe have earned a wide reputation for their work socially and artistically and presented their work (alongside Kanayo from Cocoroom) at the Rio 2016 Cultural Olympiad.

The Big Issue not only produces an edition of the famous magazine but also runs programmes in sports and arts including supporting the Sokerissa programme, and poetry competitions. It has a system of part-funding projects where three or more vendors decide to start a group which could be anything from discussing trains to organising walking tours. Meanwhile, in Kotobuki in Yokohama, **Kotobuki Creative Action (KCA)** organises artistic programmes including artist residencies. This is, rather remarkably, partly organised by a city council official who is in charge of arts – he is a board member for KCA, doing it in his own time.

Although most mainstream arts organisations are concentrating on disability, this is not the case in homelessness. There is a huge opportunity to forge relationships between them and the homeless sector. A particularly forward-thinking example is the **Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum** which is one of nine large, public arts institutions around Ueno Park in Tokyo. Ueno Park has long been the home of rough sleepers with many using the foyers of the cultural institutions to sit down and get warm. Like many cultural spaces around the world, they struggle to know what to do – not wanting to eject the homeless people but also not engaging with them. This is an ideal group of organisations to include into **With One Voice’s Cultural Spaces Homelessness Strategy** work – a review of examples of how museums, libraries, galleries and venues are engaging with homeless people and to share practice between them. This paper will be launched at an international summit of arts and homelessness in 2018 and will evolve into a sharable toolkit in 2019.
At all of our meetings, and through consultation/discussion workshops in Tokyo, Kotobuki and Osaka, we talked about the Olympics and whether the **Tokyo 2020 Cultural Olympiad** was a good opportunity for the arts/homelessness sector. There was almost unanimous agreement from all parties that what happened in London and Rio, in giving homeless people a creative platform, should happen for Tokyo 2020. Most people thought that it would be an effective way to educate the public and promote more positive understanding about homelessness and homeless people. A notable exception is the group of artist activists who live in **Yoyogi Park** who are campaigning against the Olympics. However, the overwhelming feeling was that the Olympics is a chance to show homeless people in a different light. The sector is dreaming big – and we will be there to support them.

**Recommendations**

Through consultation with the sector including arts and homelessness projects, homeless centres, policy makers, arts institutions and homeless people, we have set out the following aims for a With One Voice project in Japan:

**With One Voice Japan Project Aims:**

- To link arts and homelessness projects around Japan to share practice and to link the sector with projects and policy-makers from overseas

- To build infrastructural support for arts and homelessness projects especially supporting organisations to build back-room capacity

- To amplify the work of the arts and homelessness sector and in so doing to promote positive attitudes to homeless people

- To enable homeless people to have a greater voice and involve homeless people more in decision-making in the arts and homelessness sectors

- To work with the sector to create Japan’s first arts and homelessness policy and strategy and to try to embed this into the national homelessness strategy – and to engage policy makers at national government to do this.

- To give homeless people a platform at the Tokyo 2020 Cultural Olympiad

**Activities:**

- Organise three exchanges with arts/homelessness projects, homeless people, arts organisations and homelessness organisations. These would be in UK (part of the International Arts and Homelessness Summit in Manchester in Sept 2018); in Japan in 2019 and at the Tokyo 2020 Cultural Olympiad

- Set up a national arts/homelessness committee which would bring the sector together at regular intervals including members of civic and civil society.

- A programme of capacity building for arts and homelessness projects including organising producer placements/secondments from arts organisations into a/h projects
Organise events, presentations, discussions at the Tokyo 2020 Cultural Olympiad

2) Homelessness in Japan

Context and Culture

In order to understand the situation of homelessness in Japan it is important to consider recent history and cultural context.

The so-called ‘Lost Decade’ in Japan resulting from the 1991 economic crash effected everyone in society. Up to that point, when the economy was booming for many years, the construction industry particularly flourished and thousands of ‘day labourers’ were employed on daily or short contracts. These jobs would be advertised in districts in cities including Kamagasaki in Osaka, Kotobuki in Yokohama and Sanya in Tokyo.

Since the contracts were short, none were secure. Many jobs were for just one day and longer contracts would typically have accommodation included. After the crash, there was little infrastructure to help these workers and the districts where they had lived and found work became the ‘slums’ that we know today. The Airin centre in Kamagasaki has for many years been the hub for the construction market in the district - jobs are advertised every morning and applicants sign up. Whereas there were hundreds of jobs on offer in the boom, it is now like a ghost town – a huge building where street homeless people sleep on the hard, concrete floors. Queues still form for jobs that are offered but in far fewer numbers than before.

The other obvious fact you notice is that not only is everyone male but predominantly older. Japan has an aging population and over 75% of homeless people are over 55. Although there is a welfare system in Japan, you need to have regular work to ‘pay into’ your pensions so many of the day labourers lost out and many people still need to work past retirement age.

Cultural considerations play a huge part in the homelessness situation because there is a strong expectation that people will be part of society. There is a traditional view that there are three cornerstones to everyone’s lives – family, society and job. This is known as ‘shakai-jin’ – literally meaning ‘society-people’ and there is a sense that you need to be useful and contribute to society. This accounts for a number of homeless people genuinely choosing to live on the streets – consciously deciding to get out of a system they perceive as rigid system with its one-dimensional values. This attitude is evident at policy level and it is clear from several meetings with local and national government that homelessness is seen as an individual issue rather than a society one.

Anecdotally, there is a very large population of young people sleeping in internet cafes and a great number of ‘shut-ins’ – particularly young people not leaving flats (government estimate 400,000 according to the Big Issue). Although many of this group have accommodation, many would be regarded as ‘at risk’ of homelessness. We could not find any figures (government or otherwise) of hidden homeless people.
Street Homelessness – the street and parks

Government figures show around 5,534 rough sleepers across Japan – this number is taken from street counts going back to 2004 (see below). Although figures show a huge decrease from 25,000 in 2004, the way numbers have been calculated has changed including how street counts in some places are organised during the day as opposed to at night which is the usual model. Also, the economic crash of the 1991 created a huge number of homeless people and this has steadily declined as NPOs (non-profit organisations) have taken the load and the population has become older and have moved to single-room Doyas (see below).

![Change in the number of homeless people](image)

In an initiative run by the Tokyo Institute of Technology’s ARCH project (Advocacy and Research Centre for Homelessness), students have done night street counts twice a year in Tokyo, finding 1,331 rough sleepers. This is 250% more than the official figures so extrapolating this would make the national figure of homeless people close to 15,000. For context, the UK which, broadly speaking has a similar climate and where homeless people need to take shelter in the winter, the official government homeless figures are around 3,000.
The government hope to reduce rough sleeping to zero by 2026 through directing more people to hostels and implementing a Housing First programme.

Alcohol is an issue on the streets (particularly One Cup sake that is very cheap and available from outside vending machines) but there is very little begging, possibly because of cultural issues. Many people living on the streets collect and sell aluminium drinks cans.

A great deal of the street homeless community congregate and live in parks in cities – Yoyogi Park in Tokyo (left) being a prime example and ironically where the 1964 Olympics took place. This is a community made up of a variety of people numbering around 50 including two prominent arts activists run art classes/workshops (see some of the artwork, above). They often create protest artwork and one of homeless people there with us that day had recently made posters to protest against the early closure of a park in the evening nearby. His campaign worked and the park stayed open later. (See more on page 20.)

Ueno Park is another park where a large number of homeless people congregate for soup-run. The key feature here is that the park is surrounded by all the main national cultural institutions including the Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Tokyo Bunka Kaikan, the concert hall and the National Museum of Nature and Science (see page 23). This not only connects arts and homelessness physically but is also a potential community to link to WOV’s Cultural Spaces and Homelessness Strategy (see page 24).
Homeless shelters and Shien Centres (Independent Living Centres)

As is the case in most countries, the number of hidden homeless people cannot be counted, and the policy makers also don’t count the number of homeless people who are in homeless centres in official homelessness figures.

There are a very small number of nightshelters in the country, the largest of which is the Kama Nightshelter (left) in Kamagasaki, Osaka. This has 532 beds – all bunks in huge halls (at the time of our last visit in March 2017, 400 beds were occupied). The centre is clean, friendly and has a number of activities going on including a choir (see photo below) run by Cocoroom and a bi-annual arts festival. 100% of the residents of the centre are men and they sign-up to have a bed the evening before and have to be out by 5am.

There are also a small number of daycentres, some of which are attached to the nightshelters, as is the case in Kamagasaki. The Hitoana Centre in the same district is rather like a community centre for the all residents so some have experienced homelessness. The centre runs a number of activities, many through Cocoroom and is a place for isolated people to meet each other.

There are 19 ‘shien’ centres in 9 local authorities accommodating 1,492 people nationwide. The centres we visited in the country all have the same kind of facilities – shared spaces and a canteen with single rooms and shared washing facilities.

Shien centres are also known as ‘independent living’ centres which in this case means ‘getting work’. Everyone we met agreed that independent living is more than just employment but there is no clear strategy to enable people who have left the streets or a homeless centre to support themselves. Added to this, if you consider that the vast majority of homeless people are elderly, it is not surprising that there is chronic isolation and most can’t get work.

This is one of the big challenges and opportunities in building the arts/homeless sector – the arts would fit perfectly into the current national homelessness strategy. If this was done at policy level (as in Manchester through the Manchester
Homelessness Charter and Greater Manchester Homelessness Strategy), thousands of homeless people would benefit both individually and through an improved public perception.

Fukuoka and Kitakyushu both have Shien Centres (Independent Living Support Centres) which are focussed on getting homeless people back into work, typically through a six-month residential training programme.

Hobokukan runs support centres and hostels in Kitakyushu, Fukuoka, Nakama and Shimonoseki and has developed an innovative approach in its 28 years in operation. Koji Yamada (see below in the middle with his colleagues) explained how they take a much more holistic approach to supporting homeless people, proving longer-term support and aftercare following the Shien Centre programme which prevents people from slipping back into homelessness. They are also working with groups considered to be at risk of homelessness such as unemployed people, children living in poverty, and other socially isolated groups including elderly people to try to prevent homelessness from occurring.

They have a sophisticated way of providing the right support for people that recognises the importance of re-building relationships alongside housing and skills for work. While they do not currently run an arts programme, they recognise the need to create self-respect and self-worth in people. While work is primarily seen as the most important way for someone to do something of value, the arts were mentioned as another way to have something to give. AMCF/Art Support Fukuoka would like to run their drama communication workshops with their service users in the future, potentially with young people not in work. Communicating the results of the workshops to the whole NPO would be important to secure buy in. There seems to be more possibility to fit in the arts to longer term programmes; the government wants people in work quickly and doesn’t yet believe that the arts will help them to achieve that.

The data we were shown was hugely detailed and gave a much clearer picture of the issues that bring people to homelessness such as disability and learning difficulties, the educational level of households, the decreasing middle classes and breakdown
in historically strong family, community and work ties. Their information would help make a strong case for the widening of the government definition of ‘homelessness’ and to make a case for working across the very separate silos of disability, child poverty, the elderly and homelessness.

The Friendly Centre, Kawasaki (on the outskirts of Tokyo) is rather unique in the sector in that it receives people who have been turned away from the Shien Centres. There is no maximum length of stay unlike the Shien Centres – the average stay is three years. They run three accommodation services, two of 50 beds and one of 68 beds. The centre runs a variety of programmes designed to enable residents to integrate more into the community including a farm and produce programme and a collaboration with Sokerissa (a small number of residents now regularly attend Yuki’s rehearsals).

Tomoyuki Minagawa is the Director of the centres and is passionate about social integration and is very active in the community trying to reduce prejudice for homeless people by organising festivals and events where the public can meet homeless people. He is connected to a lot of other entrepreneurs who are keen to expand arts and homelessness including Hiroyuki Tamura who runs an online newspaper. Mr Minagawa is also passionate about the arts – he has seen how the Sokerissa programme has enabled the performers to express their feelings and be more proactive. These performers don’t need to be taken now to rehearsals and make their own way there. He says that they haven’t been able to document the evidence which is a key issue. If he had time, he would write a report and he is confident they would get more support that way.

Doyas – single-room accommodation

Doyas are tiny, single rooms of the size of 2-3 Japanese sleeping mats. Since they are by far the cheapest form of accommodation, they tend to command the majority of the private rented sector for the poorest in society. There is no real social housing in the country so these rooms are the automatic option for people on the edge of poverty.

It is also possible to rent rooms for very short periods of time in districts like Kamagasaki so day labourers often rent them when they can find work. The remainder of the Doya population are in receipt of benefits so can use that to pay for rent. There are an estimated 8,500 Doyas in Kamagasaki which is almost half the population of the district.
3) Homelessness in key districts

Kamagasaki, Osaka

Kamagasaki is the largest and most famous district of homelessness and isolated single people in poverty in Japan. The total population in the 800m squared district is around 20,000. In 2000 there were 1,200 street homeless people – this has fallen to 100 with an additional 400 regularly in the night-shelter. There are, in addition, an estimated 8,500 people living on social welfare in Doyas. This means that almost half of the population are homeless or at risk.

Some 97% of homeless people are men and residents of Kamagaski have the lowest life expectancy in Japan (75 compared with 80 in the rest of the country).

As previously mentioned, there are still jobs available at the Airin Centre and it is reported in certain circles that the Yakuza (Japanese mafia) are involved in trafficking some of these day labourers to jobs such as the clean-up operation following the Fukushima power station disaster.

Kotobuki, Yokohama

Government figures show 536 homeless people in Kotobuki, which is a very similar district to Kamagasaki though much smaller at 300m squared. The population is 6,300 and 85% are on welfare (higher than Kamagasaki and Sanya). 70% of residents are over 70 and 98% are men.

There is one Shien centre in Kotobuki which is much larger than many with 200 beds. 1,299 people used the centre last year and they stayed three-six months which is the norm.

We met with Mr Kawamoto from the City Council who is in charge of Creative City Planning. He has a great interest in the arts and is even chair of the main arts/homelessness org Kotobuki Creative Action in his private capacity (see page 19).

Over the years a good deal of regeneration has happened in Kotobuki and art has been key to this. Mr Kawamoto feels that the arts play an important role in benefiting the residents and, through networking and exchange, it would also raise the profile of Kotobuki in a positive way.

San’ya, Tokyo

The district of San’ya in Tokyo is similar to both Kamagasaki and Kotobuki in that it is densely packed with Doyas and people living on welfare. Again, this dates back to a time at the height of the economic growth where day labourers congregated in the district. Reports from the 1960s estimate that there were 300 buildings of doyas housing 20,000 workers.

In 1996, the Tokyo districts ‘entrusted’ their homeless people to San’ya which then became known as ‘the district of the abandoned’. At that time around 1,000
homeless people lived on the streets and that has reduced to 200 in the last street count.

Since that time, more homeless people in Tokyo are living in parks such as Ueno and Yoyogi as already mentioned and in five Shien centres around the capital, accommodating 250 people. There are no Shien Centres in San'ya itself.

**Fukuoka and Kitakyushu**

Following the national trend, rates of rough sleeping in this Prefecture have been declining since a peak in 2005 thanks to the opening of Shien Centres in that year and changes in legislation which relaxed employment laws to allow more temporary workers in factories in 2008. These kind of posts often come with accommodation and homeless people took up the jobs. Gaining access to social welfare payments further helped to house people in the area. Kitakyushu now estimates around 100 rough sleepers on the streets each night, down from 457 in 2005.

**4) Arts and Homelessness Projects**

**Cocoroom and the University of the Arts**

**Kamagasaki, Osaka**

Any review of the sector in Japan has to start with Cocoroom. Founded by Kanayo Ueda, a community activist and poet who lives and works in Kamagasaki. She began by opening a café (Cocoroom) in Kamagasaki at a time when very few people would come into the area. Cocoroom enabled homeless and ex-homeless people to connect with each other and other members of the local community over a meal, tea and arts activities including poetry.

The café expanded into a guest house (right) in 2016 which connects even more people, especially international travellers, with the residents of the area. Profits go to her University of the Arts - a programme of 90 arts workshops per year including a choir, gamelan, calligraphy and visual art (see the photo of an art workshop below at the Hitohana Centre).

Each year for the past three years, there has been an annual celebration of the programme through a mixed arts event called Kamagasaki O!pera. These showcases have been extraordinary combinations of the wealth of Kanayo’s programme and have typically featured singing, poetry readings, drama, dance, meditation gamelan and even astronomy lectures – truly embracing the word ‘opera’ which means ‘everything’. Kanayo was asked to present her work at the Yokohama Triennial in 2014 which gave Cocoroom a big boost in profile. The whole enterprise is phenomenal run by a tour de force – you mention Kanayo’s name in any arts situation in the country and people nod in reverence and respect.
'Cocoroom is a place we can meet and express ourselves and that’s what we value’, says Kanayo.

One of Kanayo’s great skills is as a connector of people – she has not only created a place for people of Kamagaski to come to but also that will attract others into the district. She works with some of the top artists in the country to give the residents the best experience but this also brings awareness and positive profile to the area. She is widely travelled in the country and abroad and has brought Streetwise Opera from the UK to work with the residents and local artists and composers since 2008. She sees With One Voice as an opportunity to bring together the national and international community of arts and homelessness to learn from each other and spread the work. ‘I see 2020 as an opportunity to build networks in Japan and elsewhere’, she says, ‘And to use those networks to find out what kind of a platform people want. From the network, society will change.’

She wants to inspire other organisations to do this kind of work and works with museums, galleries, theatre, orchestras and has a long association with the City University in Osaka. She strives for integration rather than separation.

One of the biggest challenges she faces is resources – she can access some grants and the profits from the guest house go into the programme of work but she has never been able to employ an arts manager and she feels this is an important next step.

Having worked a good deal in Kamagasaki it is also apparent that impact measurement and evaluation is not used very much in the social arts sector in Japan. Kanayo has some strong anecdotal case studies but there is no theoretical framework or system for bringing this evaluation together. One case study is about one of her elderly participants who was on the edge of suicide – at that moment he received a letter from a friend he had met through Cocoroom and realised that he had friends and this gave him the courage to continue.

Cocoroom is truly one of the most inspiring projects in the world in this sector and one of the great opportunities of any project in Japan is to share Kanayo’s methodology with other projects internationally. With One Voice did this in Rio 2016 at the Cultural Olympiad she and Yuki from Sokerissa and some of their performers to Rio for the Cultural Olympiad and their work inspired many people there from all around the world.
Sokerissa, Tokyo

Sokerissa was founded by professional choreographer Yuki Aoki in 2007 when he was performing outdoors in Tokyo. He saw that one of the audience members was a homeless man who had lost his trousers and did not care about showing his hips in a public space. His body and the history behind it attracted Yuki very much artistically. He felt compelled to use dance, his art-form to give people like this man his dignity and enable him to show the public a different side of homelessness.

Yuki approached the Big Issue Foundation who got behind the idea and found a rehearsal space for him and for a decade he has been meeting around 6-7 homeless people to dance each week. He often rehearses in parks where homeless people live and recruits new dancers straight from the street. The initiative is gaining a lot of profile and respect and the regularity of performances and the profile of venues and festivals is continually rising.

One aspect of the operation that is similar to Cocoroom and the rest of the sector is that Yuki does this voluntarily and has no paid staff. This creates a limit to what can be achieved and risks sustainability where the NPO is reliant on just one person. ‘It is so difficult for artists and producers to survive in this sector so they don’t turn to social change’, he says. ‘We need a new system so more artists can do this.’ He sees networking overseas as key to exchanging practise and increasing the awareness of this work.

Matsuyoshi, one of Sokerissa’s dancers who is currently homeless agrees with this. ‘We should make sure we perform overseas and then the Japanese policy-makers will notice.’

Yuki, Matsuyoshi and Masato, another formerly homeless dancer from Sokerissa were all keen to point out that after the three of them returned from the With One Voice exchanges during the Rio 2016 Cultural Olympiad (see photo above) with Kanayo from Cocoroom, the profile of Sokerissa increased and more bookings for performances started coming in.

Despite the financial constraints, Sokerissa is aiming to put on eight performances in 2017, their 10th anniversary year. They are also working around the country more and recently Yuki has begun collaborating with a homeless centre, Friendy in the neighbouring city of Kawasaki (see page 11). Some of the residents of Friendy are now attending regular Sokerissa rehearsals.
Sanyukai, Tokyo

Sanyukai has been working in the district of San'ya for more than 30 years running a number of services for the residents including a space where they can congregate and meet each other. Their San'ya Art Project has been running for 18 months and involves giving residents digital cameras to take photos. 6-7 people are involved at a time and they take pictures of the neighbourhood with the aim of helping self-expression and building communication. Kazunori Yui (pictured below with Keiko Ito and Masaru Goto) has noticed that the members of the group are communicating more with each other and with the NPO which is, in turn, finding out more about their lives.

The group comes together every two months to share photos, some of which have been shown to the public. The act of sharing the photos is also very beneficial in that the members often give each other positive comments with some mentioning that no one had ever said anything positive about them before.

Sanyukai find that one of the key issues facing the people of San'ya is isolation. Accommodation isn’t enough and they work hard to provide opportunities for people to get together. Their ‘Place to Be and Reason to Live’ project give a space to residents who themselves decide what activity to explore. They have decided to meet each month for craft and gardening workshops – the group has made a number of Japanese dolls which are sold through the NPO.

Sanyukai feel that the key impact the arts have is to connect people and to celebrate their achievements. They have been keeping information about the changes they see in the residents. So far, they have kept attendance records, documented observational changes and asked the participants about the effect the art has. This data hasn’t yet been collated and the NPO is keen to work with international partners to learn more about evaluation frameworks. They are also very keen to exhibit the photographs around Japan and abroad and feel that a national and international network would be very important.
Big Issue Foundation, Tokyo

The Big Issue Company Japan was established in 2003, and The Big Issue Foundation has been conducting activities since 2007. “The Big Issue Japan” is sold by people who have experience with homelessness and originally began as the Japanese language publication of the British magazine “The Big Issue”. There are currently 130 sellers throughout Japan, of which approximately 40 are in Tokyo.

Certified NPO The Big Issue Foundation run a number of proactive cultural and sports activities, including a football team (they are also active in the world street football community), an English conversation club, a walking club and a computer club. There is a provision in place with a portion of our operating funds available if three homeless people express an interest in forming a club and in the past, we also an art club, a baseball club and a choir group. We have collaborated in helping to start up art-related projects, such as the "On The Road Literary Award" for homeless people, and Sokerissa. We continue to collaborate to this day.

At The Big Issue, we believe that it is important to raise awareness of the importance of mental health in homeless people and that art can help with this. Additionally, in the past we developed self-assessment tools for these activities but we have not continued this. This is because sharing tools for measuring and assessing at an international level has great merit and is linked to raising more financial support for the sector.

The Big Issue is also active in research and the publication of the results of a survey on youth homelessness conditions has drawn a large amount of attention from the mass media. Additionally, we are drawing up a document with proposals for policies concerning gambling, housing and the support of young people.

Arts and homelessness in Fukuoka (AMCF)

Yuko Itoyama and Asuka Ohmaru are part of Arts Management Centre Fukuoka – they run drama workshops with socially marginalised people in partnership with Art Support Fukuoka as well as running the cultural spaces in Fukuoka, supporting young drama practitioners and international artistic exchange.

Yuko was inspired to start using drama with homeless people having regularly encountered a large number of rough sleepers on her way home from working at the theatre each night. Using her contacts at the Cultural Promotion section of the local government, she was introduced to the Social Welfare department who in turn
introduced her to the manager of the newly build Shien Centre in Fukuoka. Luckily, the head of the centre loved drama and was prepared to give it a chance.

The ‘drama communication workshops’ (see left) were designed to help people towards work by building confidence, leading to greater social inclusion and therefore a reduction in the social cost of being unemployed. The drop-in style workshops ran over two years and were led by two facilitators whose previous experience had been working with children; they adapted their approach over time to gradually build up trust and allow people to open up. The head of the centre made it compulsory for residents on the communication skills programme to attend the workshops and felt that if it had been voluntary people would not have attended. He thought that the barrier of drama being too scary or just for children would have kept people away.

Initially they had funding from the Toyota Foundation local society in years one and two and from New Year’s cards but since the funder agendas have changed they are now self-funded with some additional money coming from private companies.

Initial evaluation of the programme by Yayoi Koga from Art Support Fukuoka / Kwassui Women's University is showing:

- Previously isolated people are now talking to each other, allowing communication skills to build. Practice in the safe space of the centre is improving communication with staff and the public outside
- Better relationship and social skills
- Increase is self esteem

This is an important report and could not only help raise awareness and amplify the work of the arts/homelessness sector in Japan but will also feed into WOV’s International Arts and Homelessness Literature Review which is being compiled in 2017/18.

The AMCF drama sessions have since moved to a different venue where homeless and other vulnerable groups meet. They now run six sessions in each course with sessions taking place twice a month.

Yuko would like to offer more of these workshops (given the right funding and homeless centre partners) and potentially create an alumni group so that people who have left the Shien Centres can still participate. She would also like to run sessions
for young people. Since our visit Yuko and her team have been visiting various departments of Fukuoka local government with people from the Culture Department of Fukuoka Prefecture about possible workshops for disabled children, young people and homeless people. If funded, hopefully by the Ministry of Culture, these would be run in various locations.

**Kotobuki Creative Action, Yokohama**

The main arts NPO in Kotobuki is eight years old and exists to help Kotobuki and its residents be embraced. They run three main projects per year under the chairmanship of Mr Kawamoto the City Council official responsible for Creative City Planning who engages with this activity in his private capacity.

The main programme is an Artist Residencies where five artists work in the district for three weeks in the spring and three weeks in the summer. Projects vary but they are mostly visual arts. Mr Kawamoto showed us digital photos of many of the projects including one artist who worked in a number of Doyas, giving paintings to the inhabitants of the rooms.

Each year there is a parade and this is having a noticeable positive effect on the neighbourhood. There have also been film festivals and lantern festivals (using the One Cup sake cans for the lanterns).

Again, although there has been funding for the activities, none of the organisers have been paid and all supporting themselves through other work. For the NPO, networking is key and they have already worked with Cocoroom and the city has an association with Scotland. Mr Kawamoto would welcome further exchanges to share practice – he feels that the sector needs to raise its profile and networking would do that. He also feels that it would be very positive for homeless people to have a platform at the Olympics.

We had visited Kotobuki around eight years previously and the neighbourhood has been noticeably smartened up with the arts taking a key part in this.

**5) Key Stakeholders and Organisations**

**Homeless People**

Through the research period in 2017 and through three other visits going back to 2008, we have met and spoken with a large number of homeless people and people at risk of homelessness. Most are members of the arts groups we have been working with including Cocoroom, Sokerissa, AMCF and Sanyukai but also other residents of Kamagasaki, Kotobuki and the residents of Yoyogi park.

During this period, the vast majority of the people we met matched the demographic of homelessness – male and over the age of 60. We also enabled two Sokerissa members to travel to Rio for the Cultural Olympiad – they ran workshops in homeless centres in Rio with Yuki, performed a number of times and shared ideas
and practice with other groups from around the world. For one of the members, the trip resulted in him receiving his first ID through WOV securing a passport for him.

When asked what art meant to people with experience of homelessness, most said that it made them feel positive about themselves and it was a way of meeting new people. The language is different in other countries but the sentiment is the same – the arts helps people build well-being and build bridges from isolation to inclusion. There is also a clear feeling that the arts can help change the public’s perception of homeless people and this is again a theme running through the sector in every country – in Rio it was articulated as ‘visibility and dignity’ and the same is true in Japan.

There is also a feeling that the arts is a way of escaping – as on new member of Sokerissa put it eloquently, ‘When I dance, I forget everything else’.

One of the most memorable moments in the research phase was meeting some of the residents of Yoyogi Park – there are two prominent arts activists, Tetsuo Ogawa and Misako Ichimura, who have been living in the park for nearly 15 years. They paint and run art workshops as well as craft workshops for women residents of the park (see some of the artwork below). They are very active demonstrating for rights of all sorts of groups, primarily homeless people and are using creativity in the demonstrations.

And the whole community are firmly anti-Olympics because they say that the motivation is to regenerate areas and to move homeless people away from the public eye. They say that officials have been moving people away even three years before the Olympics have begun. We had a fascinating conversation sitting outside their tent drinking tea together with Kanayo Ueda from Cocoroom. Kanayo feels that it is important to create a positive platform as a protest against the displacement of homeless people, and that despite her misgivings about the Olympics happening in Tokyo, it is important to give homeless people a platform at the Olympics and show them in a positive light. She wants to use the opportunity to create connection between homeless people and society.

The other prominent community of homeless people in a park is in Ueno which is the centre of the cultural quarter – the park is surrounded by the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and the concert hall Tokyo Bunka Kairikan. Homeless people use the foyers of some of these buildings (see more on page 24).

It is interesting to note that despite the officials not wanting to see homeless people living in parks, they are clearly not legally allowed to remove them.
Policy Makers

Government responsibility for homelessness lies in the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. The current strategy was written in 2002 (which was the first government homelessness strategy) and runs to 2017. There is a wide call for it to be extended for another 10 years.

The government adopts a top-down approach and all homelessness policy flows down from Tokyo to each of the 47 prefectures and the cities and towns within the districts.

We met civil servants from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (from left to right, Chika Sudo, Matt Peacock, Hidetoshi Sugibuchi, Kaoru Hirata, Yusuke Takahashi and Ellie Raymont) who target their support to the Shien Centres and less to the street population and our assumption is that this is the case since the official figures for street homeless people are very low and have been declining since 2004 from 25,000 to around 6,500 in 2016. But as mentioned already, the street counts are conducted during the day when many homeless people are not found on the streets.

The national officials we met hadn’t heard of any of the arts and homelessness groups we mentioned nor that a sector existed. And yet, disability arts is very much in the public eye and is going to be receiving 2billion yen from 2018. There is a sophisticated national strategy for disability arts leading to the Paralympics in 2020 which has been built over 20 years of practice. There are an estimated 7million disabled people in Japan within a population of 120million.

Despite the investment going into both disability and the elderly, it seems that homelessness is not a priority are despite the majority of homeless people being elderly and many having disability issues. It could be effect to communicate this more in order to bring homelessness up the agenda for both the public and the policy makers.

In terms of local policy makers, we met officials from all the cities we visited with the unanimous message that homelessness was not a government priority but disability and aging was. It is worth noting that Mr Kawamoto in Yokohama is unusual in that he bridges both arts and homelessness and is a passionate advocate of the arts.
In addition, we met policy makers from local government in Kawasaki City who didn’t yet run any projects with homeless people but were open to the idea of cultural policy being embedded more into social policy as is happening in Manchester, UK. They felt that it would be important to prove that arts can contribute to independent living since that was the core of the homelessness policy.

Finally, it is also clear that, like many countries, the voice of homeless people within the corridors of power is non-existent, nor is there any evident desire to consult homeless people when it comes to homelessness legislation.

**British Council Arts, Japan**

The importance and the impact of the British Council cannot be emphasised enough. It is through the vision and the dedication of the arts team, especially Manami Yuasa and Chika Sudo that the arts and homelessness sector is where it is today. They identified the sector as developing its impact in the mid 2000s, brought a delegation of arts and social welfare to the UK in 2006/7 and continued to support international exchanges to Japan, including Streetwise Opera from 2008 onwards.

The status of the British Council is such that doors are open for meetings from government departments to grass roots organisations and this is key in developing what is an effective sector to one which can increase its sustainability and links into national and local strategies. The BC arts department are incredibly well connected and respected in the field and their support would be the most important ingredient in any national capacity building and infrastructure support programme in the arts and homelessness sector.

**Academics**

**ARCH (Advocacy and Research Centre for Homelessness), Tokyo Institute of Technology**

ARCH is led by Professor Masato Dohi (third from left with his co-chairs, Nao Kasai and Takuya Kitabatake), an academic and activist who believes in research leading to action. ARCH is a unique programme that researches homelessness, producing street count figures in Tokyo that are more accurate than the government in that they occur at night rather than during the day when there are fewer homeless people. The first count occurred in Jan 2016 and they now occur twice a year. The last count was 1,331 compared with the government’s official figure of 571.

The counts involved 40-50 volunteer members of the public working with service providers and NPOs and there is a clear aim to create more understanding between
the public and homeless people. Dohi and his passionate team of students have the clear and ambitious aim of wanting to make Tokyo a kinder, gentler and more inclusive city by 2020. They also talk about Sydney 2000 as a key moment when homeless people in Australia earned the same rights as other members of the public under the Homeless People Protocol for Public Spaces.

**The Results of TSC**

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Other Universities

There are a number of academics working in homelessness and already interested and engaged in the work going on in Japan and With One Voice. Key among them is **Osaka City University** which has long had an association with Cocoroom and run programmes in Kamagasaki including the gamelan course. They have been an important link between ‘mainstream’ Osaka and the isolated district of Kamagasaki. This has largely been spearheaded by an enlightened professor Dr Shin Nakagawa.

We also reported on Professor Koga’s research on the AMCF project in Fukuoka above. She is from the **Kwassui Women’s University** and her study could be very important in the future growth of the arts and homelessness sector in Japan.

We also met Dr Toshiaki Amano both in London and Osaka. Dr Amano is unusual in holding research briefs in government and university (at the Osaka City Council Dept of Commerce, Industry and Labour and at **Kobe University**). He is predominantly studying NEETs (young people Not in Education Employment or Training) but is also interested in homelessness and has written about Streetwise Opera. In addition we know that the collaboration between Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum and the **Tokyo University of the Arts** is an important one (see the next section on Arts Organisations below) and we hope that this will be an important factor in any WOV project.
In any project connecting and supporting the national arts and homelessness movement, the university will be a key ally and voice.

**Arts Organisations**

There are very few examples of arts organisations working with the arts/homelessness sector. Arts and disability is a key area of focus and the sector has been building for 20 years, primarily as a result of the large numbers of disabled people (7 million of a population of 120 million according to the Ministry of Health) in the country.

We spoke with a key arts venue who shall remain nameless who were quite candid about the fact that the agenda for working in the community came from the state and not from the organisation or the community themselves. This is typical of the top-down approach to arts strategy which is passed from national to local authority to the sector – it is clear that many organisations are less able to set their own agendas. For the arts and homelessness sector to build, it is another important demonstration that the sector needs to influence the national policy-makers.

**Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum**

The museum is situated in Ueno park alongside eight of the country’s national cultural institutions such as the National Museum of Nature and Science and Tokyo Bunka Kaikan the concert hall (it is an interesting footnote that Jorge Prendas, the iconic founder of Som da Rua in Porto, the homelessness band/ensemble works a great deal with Bunka Kaikan although with young people rather than in the homelessness community). The fact that these cultural heavy-weights all face into a park where homeless people congregate for soup-run is a significant opportunity to build bridges between the arts and the homeless community.

The Museum has a very forward-thinking approach and the education team (from right to left, Sawako Inaniwa, Chief for Education and Public Programs, Tatsuya Ito, Associate Professor for Tokyo University of the Arts and Kazumi Kumagai, Assistant Curator) has a range of projects and activities that engage with the community. Although they are not currently working with homeless people directly, they are very engaged with the idea and talked at our meeting about opening up their Diversity in the Arts programme to engage with the homeless community (this is a course to skill-up students to work more in the community). They were particularly interested in the photography projects at Sanyu-kai and this is a link With One Voice can make which may have a significant impact.
The proximity of homeless people living near to the Museum means that a number of them come into the foyer to get warm in the winter and use the toilet facilities. The Museum staff want to help and do more but have little knowledge of this community and what to do. This is a story that is happening the world over where cultural spaces are open to the whole of society and often do not know how best to engage with homeless people. There is no shared practice and no guidance.

In 2017, With One Voice commissioned Phyllida Shaw to create a Cultural Spaces Homelessness Strategy Review which will bring together learning and practice from museums, galleries, venues and libraries around the world. Many cultural spaces faces questions around how to welcome and engage homeless people into buildings but there is no shared practice in the sector. The Review will feature case studies and examples of successful practise and ideas – the Review will be alunched at the 2018 International Summit of Arts and Homelessness in Manchester and a practical toolkit will be available by spring 2019. The Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum could be a good place to test and implement the toolkit.

6) With One Voice Questions

When WOV compiles a country review of arts and homelessness in that country, we ask the same questions in order to establish key areas of opportunity and need. The questions also enable WOV to establish what the movement can do to support what is already in the country rather than creating anything new which is the danger in some international development projects. Many of our questions are asked directly to interviewees during the research and have been reported in relevant sections of this Review.

We also carried out two workshops with a variety of stakeholders in Fukuoka and Tokyo and the results of these workshops are available in Appendix 2.

1) How is homelessness defined in this country? Are there categories of homelessness? What statistics are collected and how

This is covered in section 2 of the review. The phrase ‘homeless people’ is generally used to describe people who sleep outside. Street counts run by the Welfare dept of the national government show 6,245 homeless people on the streets but this count is conducted during the day which is unusual. The ARCH project at the Tokyo Institute of Technology conduct a street count at night (more common) and figures show 1,331 homeless people in Tokyo (as opposed to 571 in the govt street count).

Homeless people are predominantly an elderly population with 75% of the street population 55 or over, mostly due to the economic crash of the 1990s. The vast majority of homeless people are men.

There is very little public awareness and sympathy for homeless people. Homelessness is seen as an individual problem rather than a society one and therefore not the responsibility of society to help. This sentiment is partly the result of cultural considerations in Japan where there is much more of a strong responsibility
to be ‘part’ of the community and society. If you ‘fall out’ of society or chose not to be part of it, there is little sympathy. Social issues much higher up the agenda include child poverty and disability (which is beginning to be seen as a responsibility for society rather than an individual or medical issue).

2) What is the infrastructure of support for Homeless people [with some background information on the spheres of government and the context of the country/city]

The state support for homeless people is mostly through Shien Centres, also called ‘Independent Living Centres’. National homelessness strategy cascades down from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare to the local authorities and then to the Shien Centres which are mostly Non-Profit Organisations. These centres provide accommodation to around 30-50 people and help residents access job opportunities. There are no statistics as to how many people live in Shien centres but there are 19 centres in the country with nearly 1,500 people living in those centres.

Homeless people who have welfare or pensions can stay in tiny one-room accommodation called Doyas. These are the main housing stock in the well-known poor districts in Osaka, Tokyo and Yokohama and the number of people living in Doyas is in the tens of thousands.

3a) Are there, in this country any cultural organisations or groups (arts, heritage, sport) that have been set up specifically by, with or for homeless people? If so, what are they and where are they?

We have found six main arts/homelessness projects so far (all discussed in section 3) – Cocoroom and the University of the Arts Kamagasaki, Osaka; Sokerissa, Tokyo; Sanyukai, Tokyo; Big Issue Foundation, Tokyo; Arts Management Centre Fukuoka; Kotobuki Creative Action

3b) Are there other cultural organisations for whom homelessness is one of their priorities and who work with homeless people some of the time?

We have not found any arts organisations where homelessness is a key priority or part of the strategy. There are a small number of organisations such as Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum which are keen to engage with the homelessness community.

3c) Are there homelessness organisations in this country/city that use the arts on a regular basis?

Again, it is very rare for any homelessness organisation to have an art programme – notable exceptions are the Kama nightshelter in Kamagasaki which hosts a Cocoroom choir; the Friendly Centre in Kawasaki that has begun working with Sokerissa and the Shien centre in Fukuoka where the AMCF drama and communication projects began. There are possibilities of growing the number of homeless centres involved in the arts, particularly through organisations like the Hobokukan in Kita Kyushu.
4) Are there documentary reports and/or evaluations available?

We have found very few reports or evaluations – the main one we came across is a study on drama workshops by Arts Management Centre Fukuoka run by Kwassui Women’s University in Nagasaki. The Hitohana Centre has a self-reflection form used in reports. Arts Management Centre Fukuoka, Cocoroom and Sokerissa all have case studies.

5) Is there any kind of network (formal or informal) of arts practitioners and other interested parties?

There is no network of arts and homelessness and when we conducted the research in March 2017, this was the first time any AMCF, Cocoroom and Sokerissa had come together.

There is a national homelessness network which has been set up by Tomoshi Okuda, a priest. It is 10,000 Yen to join and doesn’t contain an arts strand.

6) For those organisation or individuals in the arts and homelessness field, what would enable them to achieve more?

The key areas which are articulated in the Conclusion are: Infrastructure support (particularly finding and sustaining paid members of staff to help run the projects; networking and knowledge exchange; funding).

7) What could With One Voice add to what is already there?

WOV could help the organisations and projects come together more and share practice nationally plus also invite the projects to share with other international initiatives. WOV could use this networking and knowledge exchange for specific areas of learning need including impact measurement. As is always the case, the learning is two-way and the advantage of knowledge exchange is to expose the sector to the incredible arts practice of projects like Sokerissa and the community arts development work of Cocorrom. WOV could also help the projects work towards accessing more infrastructure support.

Finally, there is a clear interest from the existing sector to use Tokyo 2020 to raise awareness of homelessness and WOV will work with the sector, including directly with homeless people themselves, to make this happen in the way most appropriate for the stakeholders involved.

8) What would be the most appropriate process for designing and developing a project, involving all interested parties?

The voice of homeless people is quite weak in Japan and consultation/embedding homeless people’s views into legislation is non-existent. Any project needs to start with the views and ideas of homeless people being central. The existing sector of arts/homelessness is dynamic and collegiate and bringing them together is key creating a joint vision. Bringing in key policy-makers would also create awareness of the a/h sector and the potential it has.
9) What might the aims of an arts project involving homeless people in this country be?

We have identified six aims which are set out in the conclusion in section 6 which are around building networking within the sector; building infrastructure for the organisations; amplifying the arts/homelessness sector in Japan; increasing the voice of homelessness people; to create Japan’s first a/h strategy and to enable homeless people to have a creative platform at the Tokyo 2020 Cultural Olympiad.

10) What kind of project would be most likely to achieve these aims?

The needs and opportunities of the existing a/h sector are very similar to those WOV found in Brazil leading up to Rio 2016. We will therefore suggest a similar framework which includes exchanges and on-the-ground capacity building support.

11) What would be a realistic budget and what are the potential sources of support, in cash and in kind?

The budget for the project has not yet been drawn-up and will be detailed under a separate document. The project will involve international exchange and domestic work (particularly infrastructure building) which will open up funding possibilities to trusts and foundations in Japan, the UK and internationally and some statutory sources.

12) What is the ideal participant profile for this project?

The homeless sector is heavily dominated by elderly people (75% are over 55) and the majority are men. This is the case for the street population and those living in Shien Centres. Although many young people face homelessness and this number is anecdotally increasing, the project will focus mainly on the population of the existing arts/homelessness projects which reflect the elderly/male demographic of homelessness in Japan.

13) How could the project be sustained?

Legacy is at the heart of any WOV project and any project in Japan needs to be seen as a process of long-term building and support of the sector. It is also important that the context of 2020 needs to be seen as an opportunity during a project rather than as the culmination or end of the project. Creating networks and trying to engage national and local policy makers into the project will be key in creating more long-term support as will bringing international delegates to share practice.

Although it is the case in the international charity sector that no project can be truly sustainable, many achieve long-term strength through a number of factors including diversifying funding, having strong impact measurement tools and creating awareness of their work.
7) Conclusions

The arts and homelessness sector in Japan is small and yet boasts some of the most interesting and impactful projects in the world from the revolutionary district-wide arts programme in Kamagasaki run by Coocroom to the world’s leading dance and homelessness company, Sokerissa in Tokyo.

The sector is very much hidden – despite wide press coverage for some of the projects, arts is not on the government homelessness agenda nor of public awareness. While the arts are seen to be important in the disability field, there is a lack of awareness of how the arts could benefit homeless people both on a personal and a societal level. Because arts strategy is top-down and is set by national government, cascading down to local authority and then to arts institutions, it is important that any project that helps to develop the sector includes influencing policy makers.

For homeless people themselves, they find themselves at the bottom of this hierarchy and therefore their ‘voice’ is very weak – they seem seldom to be involved in consultation about homelessness. Meanwhile, society’s attitude of homelessness ranges from negativity to apathy towards homeless people. It is widely thought that homeless people are on the streets because they want to be. The arts could be a powerful tool in promoting positive attitudes towards homeless people through platforming homeless people’s skills and also giving them a voice.

The sector is also disconnected from each other and, in general, from the wider arts sector. Immediate impacts would begin to happen if the existing projects came together more often. The set-up of local networks through With One Voice has been highly successful in Rio and UK so far not least to connect the sector but also to bring other stakeholders together including mainstream arts orgs, homeless agencies and policy makers. This would help the arts and homelessness sector gain recognition and make inroads into policy, mainstream arts and wider homelessness strategies.

The existing arts and homelessness organisations working in Japan all see the importance of not only getting together but with the wider international community. They see it as beneficial to see other projects overseas and also to bring international projects to Japan. This would enable them to share practice and also demonstrate credibility to Japanese policy-makers and funders. If the sector in Japan is attracting international guests, this must be a sector worth supporting. In this way, since the Brazilian sector felt the same in the lead up to Rio 2016, it appears logical to organise a set of exchanges which follow the same rhythm as in Rio: Three exchanges, the first in UK and the following two in the host country. Serendipitously WOV is organising a first International Arts/Homelessness Summit to bring the sector together in 2018 in Manchester, UK and this would be an ideal opportunity to invite the a/h sector in Japan to take part and share practice with international colleagues. The following two exchanges would be in Japan and would involve carefully selected projects, policy-makers and homeless people from other countries to coming to Japan, culminating in the 2020 Cultural Olympiad.
The sector is also united in their struggle to keep their work going. On one level the lack of awareness and value of arts/homelessness makes funding challenging but there is a more fundamental capacity issue where none of the organisations have any paid back-room staff. This is not uncommon to find the same situation around the world and it seems vital to help the existing organisations with their infrastructure. Because of the strength of the mainstream arts sector and the effectiveness of the British Council as a connector, it could be impactful to have arts producers seconded to arts/homelessness projects. This would have the added impact of connecting mainstream arts projects with the arts/homelessness sector for the first time. Other bodies such as the Clore Leadership Programme could help to provide high quality producers to work with the sector on secondment.

Through consultation with the sector and all the interviews and visits we have made, we have set out the following aims for a With One Voice project in Japan:

**With One Voice Japan Project Aims:**

- To link arts and homelessness projects around Japan to share practice and to link the sector with projects and policy-makers from overseas
- To build infrastructural support for arts and homelessness projects especially supporting organisations to build back-room capacity
- To amplify the work of the arts and homelessness sector and in so doing to promote positive attitudes to homeless people
- To enable homeless people to have a greater voice and involve homeless people more in decision-making in the arts/homelessness sector
- To work with the sector to create Japan’s first arts and homelessness policy and strategy and to try to embed this into the national homelessness strategy – and to engage policy makers at national government to do this.
- To give homeless people a platform at the Tokyo 2020 Cultural Olympiad

**Activity:**

- Organise three exchanges with arts/homelessness projects, homeless people, arts organisations, homelessness organisations and policy-makers coming together from Japan and other countries. These would be:
  - **September 2018, Manchester UK** (part of the International Arts and Homelessness Summit). A small group of Japanese delegates from the categories above would attend the Summit and work with colleagues from all over the world
  - **Summer 2019, Japan-wide.** Around 10-12 international delegates from the categories above would meet and exchange policy and practice with Japanese colleagues from the sector. The delegates would be selected according to the needs of the Japanese projects and the best ‘fit’ – also building on relationships that have started at the Summit
- **Summer 2020, Tokyo** (during Cultural Olympiad). Another 10-12 international delegates would join the Japan sector for exchanges and events during the Cultural Olympiad. The delegates would be a combination of new visitors and those with existing relationships with their Japanese counterparts.

- Set up a national arts/homelessness committee which would bring the sector together at regular intervals including members of civic and civil society.

- A programme of capacity building for arts and homelessness projects including organising producer placements/secondments from arts organisations into a/h projects

- Organise events, presentations, discussions at the Tokyo 2020 Cultural Olympiad