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My Career and Challenges in the Social Aspects of Nuclear Energy

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Self-Introduction

Name: Ken Nakamura

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Hometown: Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture

University: Kwansei Gakuin University, School of Sociology

Major: Social Psychology

- Consensus building on NIMBY issues
- Pluralistic ignorance



A scene from an event for children

Job Responsibilities: Public relations activities to raise awareness and foster understanding of the geological disposal project

- Educational support programs
- Outreach classes
- Learning support programs

Job Responsibilities

Educational support programs

- Supporting teachers and education professionals in developing and implementing lectures on geological disposal.
- Implementing study sessions, facility tours, and other related activities.

Outreach classes

- NUMO staff and others visit elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, colleges of technology, and universities to provide information on geological disposal and increase interest in and understanding of these topics.



Bentonite experiment during an outreach class

Learning support programs

- Supporting independent initiatives by local organizations, NPOs, and others to deepen understanding of geological disposal.
- Two types of support are provided: a “menu-based program,” in which participants select from predefined activities, and a “self-planned program,” in which organizations plan their own activities.
- Implementing study sessions, facility tours, and other related activities.



Facility tour

Reasons for and Initial Interest in Nuclear Energy

The ”Who and Why Game” that I participated in during a university class in the first semester of my second year

- Using a geological disposal facility as the topic, participants take on the roles of four stakeholders —local residents, scholars/experts, the general public, and public institutions— and discuss who has the legitimate right to determine “who should make the decision,” with the aim of reaching consensus.
- Implemented as the final lecture of the course ”Gaming Social Psychology,” taught by Professor Hiroshi Nonami.

Became aware of the pressing social issue of **high-level radioactive waste disposal**, which cannot be postponed indefinitely.



(Nonami, 2017)

Reasons for and Initial Interest in Nuclear Energy

Visit to the Ohi Nuclear Power Plant as a member of a seminar group

- Discussed nuclear power generation from both pro-nuclear and anti-nuclear perspectives, and then toured the power plant to learn about the safety measures in place to address the questions and concerns raised during the discussion.

Fukui seen from the perspective of an electricity-consuming region

- I knew that there were nuclear power plants in Fukui, but that was about it.

- A visit to the power station transformed nuclear energy from something distant and unrelated to my own life into a tangible, immediate reality, sparking a greater interest in nuclear energy.

Reasons for and Initial Interest in Nuclear Energy

What motivated me to pursue a career in nuclear energy

Motivation behind the Decision

Following my instinct that "this looks interesting"

Working at NUMO on geological disposal —a challenging, long-term national project— **seemed "interesting"**

What I Have Learned through My Engagement in Nuclear Energy

In particular, through the back end—geological disposal

- Although geological disposal is a controversial project, working together toward a common goal of not passing on a burden to future generations is highly rewarding.

- Even without having majored in nuclear engineering, there are areas in which I can thrive.

Nuclear energy is not “a scientific subject far from my everyday life,” but a “**challenging**” field to work in from a societal perspective.