



## Interview with Yoko Hayashi, ArtsAlive, Tokyo

Japan has the highest percentage of senior citizens in the world and, according to the OECD, also the highest prevalence of dementia (2.3% of the population) among OECD countries.

We talked about strategies for engaging people with dementia in the cultural life of the community through the arts and museums with Yoko Hayashi, professor of arts and museum management at Shobi University in Tokyo, founder and chairwoman of Arts Alive.

### **What is Arts Alive and what is its mission?**

Arts Alive is a non profit organization in Tokyo Japan founded in 2009, whose mission is to empower people of all ages, including elderly with cognitive challenges, through the power of the arts. Arts Alive has developed ARTRIP, an evidence based inquiry based art program for people with cognitive impairment, and offers training seminars for art conductors who facilitate ARTRIP at National Museum of Western Art and other art museums as well as dozens of nursing homes and day services on regular basis. It is also involved in research on the efficacy of arts programs, including ARTRIP, from clinical basis.

### **Training is one of the most significant activities among those promoted by Arts Alive. What is your approach, who are the recipients of the training courses and what has been the impact of the pandemic on your programmes?**

When I developed ARTRIP, I had a goal to disseminate it throughout Japan so that I wanted to train the program facilitators. I chose to train in small group with hands-on approach, including on-site training and peer review system at partner nursing homes, as I want to make sure that people I train not just learn the program but can conduct ARTRIP by themselves in their communities. We are also grateful that some of our participants joined our training sessions to enhance the trainees learning experiences. Due to the pandemic we made our



training programs online through ZOOM. I have taught two basic courses and will be teaching the first intermediate course, which is more hands-on, starting on 27th of March. The great thing about distant learning is that people at distant locations can participate in the courses.

**What is the relationship between museum programmes for people with dementia and health and social services in your country?**

Currently there is no specific relationship between museums and health services in Japan. However several doctors got interest in ARTRIP and have observed ARTRIP at art museums in the past. Also professional caregivers from local nursing homes sometimes accompany their residents to art museums to participate in ARTRIP. One of them was so impressed that she began to offer ARTRIP at her nursing home since then and it has been 10 years. I hope Arts Alive becomes a bridge connecting the art museums and health services in Japan.