

Domingo Alberto Melenciano Aquino, Dominican Republic Participant

I'm very honored for sharing my experiences in the local program at Yamaguchi Prefecture.

Being in Yamaguchi's local program was a very fruitful experience. At first, we had the chance to know about very interesting facts about Yamaguchi and the Meiji Restoration Period in Japan, along with some icebreaking dynamic activities to interact with local youths of Yamaguchi Prefecture.

Visiting the Saika Tei was just fascinating. The Saika Tei is a traditional restaurant which served not only Japanese but also western cuisine, mainly for leaders in Japan. There are many real signatures by political leaders from the Meiji to present ages. At Saika Tei, we were able to dress the traditional garment of Japan, Kimono and each one of us felt really excited about wearing the Japanese traditional clothing.

After wearing the Kimono, we began our journey to the past and visited Hagi City, one of the cities of Yamaguchi Prefecture and the hometown of Shoin Yoshida, intellectual and revolutionary teacher who devoted himself and made an outstanding contribution to the Meiji Restoration.

At Hagi City, we also had the opportunity to visit

the Hagi Pottery Workshop, where we exchanged some interesting thoughts with the owner of the store and how his 50 years' work have made history in the community and Japan as well. Finally, in our visit to Hagi City, we visited the Hagi Reverberatory Furnace and the Shoka-son-juku, a private school for youths from about 100 years ago.

Last but not least, we were able to share some quality time at the courtesy call with the Yamaguchi Prefectural Government. On that opportunity we were able to listen some comments of each participant plus a gift exchange from each delegation. Finally, we enjoyed a lovely time with some students from the Junior High School of Yamaguchi University, where we sang various songs and played games with the students, promoting our culture and having fun with all of them.

In conclusion, our visit to Yamaguchi Prefecture was just amazing, we had the opportunity to learn about local Japanese culture, visit some of the most remarkable historical places in Yamaguchi, as well as exchange impression with local youths, students and authorities.



5. Osaka Prefecture

Date	Time	Activities
Sep. 30 (Wed.)	13:34	Arrive at Shin-Osaka Station
	14:30-15:30	Courtesy call on Osaka Prefectural Government * Speech by the representative of Osaka Prefectural Government * Speech by the representative of Mozambique * Gift exchange
	15:30-16:00	Orientation Viewing Osaka Castle (from bus window)
	18:00-20:00	Dinner party (with partner organizations and committee members) * Cultural performance by each country
Oct. 1 (Thu.)	9:00-10:30	Visit to Osaka Municipal Central Wholesale Markets
	11:00-12:30	Lunch at Tenjinbashi-suji Shopping Street (by groups)
	13:00-14:30	Visit to Osaka Museum of Housing and Living
	15:00-16:00	Visit to Floating Garden (Umeda Sky Building)
	18:00	Dinner
Oct.2 (Fri.)	9:30-11:15	Visit to Yoshikawa District, Toyono-cho Visit to Yoshikawa Elementary School * Cultural exchange * School tour, Q&A with Assistant Principal
	11:45-12:15	Visit to Yoshikawa Residents' Association Center * Gift exchange
	12:15-13:15	Lunch * Speech by Mayor of Toyono-cho and gift exchange
	13:15-15:15	Walking through Hanaore Street, main road of Yoshikawa District * Drop by at Social Welfare Corporation Hoyu Fukushi-kai "Shownkan" * Drop by at Yoshikawa Hachiman Shinto Shrine
	18:00-20:00	Welcome Reception * Speech by the representative of Osaka Prefectural Government * Speech by the representative of Dominican Republic * Toast by the Chairperson of Organizing Committee * Cultural performance by each country * Homestay Matching
Oct. 3 (Sat.)		Homestay
Oct. 4 (Sun.)	13:50	Depart from Shin-Osaka Station by Nozomi 230
	16:23	Arrival at Tokyo Station

Kento Fukunaga, Chairperson of Organizing Committee

It's been five years since Osaka International Youth Exchange Organization hosted this INDEX program last. Dominican Republic and Mozambique are far away from Japan and have different climates as well as cultures from those of Japan, so we prepared this program in a way participants could learn about the charm of Osaka through the universal common theme of "Food" and "Life." At Osaka Municipal Wholesale Market, we learned the diversity of food in Osaka by observing the auction as well as visiting intermediary wholesaler's shops.

We visited the Yoshikawa region of Toyono town in Osaka Prefecture. The town has a landscape of "Most beautiful mountain and village of Japan," and participants had an opportunity to interact with a wide range of people from children to elderly people and touched the scenery and the style of life as "Home" that many Japanese people have.

Over the weekend homestay, participants spent a wonderful time with the host family. Through the experience they were able to feel the Japanese style of life or food which became priceless memories.

Although we hosted this program after five years of absence, with the constant help and support from host families, volunteer members, related institutions and people, the Osaka Prefectural Government, and the Cabinet Office of Japan, I believe we were able to successfully make such a fulfilled program. We value this bond that we gained from this experience and as the Osaka International Exchange Organization, we would like to empower the active continuance of social activities in the region.

Last but not least, I would like to extend my gratitude to all people who were involved in this Osaka program.

