

## 6. Okinawa Prefecture

Date	Time	Activities
Sep. 26 (Sat.)	10:40	Depart from Haneda Airport by ANA 469
	13:25	Arrive at Naha Airport
	15:15	Arrival at JICA Okinawa
	15:30	Orientation, meet local youths, ice breaking
	16:30	Discussion on each theme
	18:30	Dinner
Sep. 27 (Sun.)	9:00	Depart from the Hotel for Institutional Visit Environment : Urazoe Ka Mi Ji Education : Naha City Daimyo Jido kan ; Children center Culture : JICA Okinawa
	12:30	Lunch
	13:45-17:30	Discussion on each theme
	18:30	Dinner
Sep. 28 (Mon.)	9:00	Discussion summary (Preparation for the summary presentation)
	12:00-13:30	Lunch
	14:00-14:40	Courtesy call on Okinawa Prefectural Government * Speech by the representative of Okinawa Prefectural Government * Speech by the representative of Latvia * Gift exchange
	15:00-16:45	Discussion summary presentation and Q/A
	16:45-17:30	Preparation for Farewell Reception
	18:30-20:30	Farewell Reception * Speech by the representative of Okinawa Prefectural Government * Speech by the representative of Okinawa IYEO * Speech by the representative of Egypt * Cultural performance by each country
Sep. 29 (Tue.)	10:00	Visit to the Memorial Park of Marine Expo
	11:00	Lunch
	12:00	Churaumi Aquarium
	14:30	Dolphin show with marine biological explanation
	18:00	Explore Kokusai Street and Dinner
Sep. 30 (Wed.)	8:15-10:30	Visit to Shuri Castle, World Heritage Site
	11:00-12:30	Lunch
	14:30	Depart from Naha Airport by ANA-1622

## Rina Uezu, President of International Youth Exchange Organization of Okinawa

This time we hosted the INDEX program for the first time. So far we had supported the local program for “The Ship for World Youth” or “Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth” programs. However, the INDEX program includes course discussion programs and the length of stay is longer. These differences gave us a fresh look for hosting the program. Although we were not used to this program, we had fun working for this after all.

For the course discussion, committee members in charge of each course had a long discussion about setting the theme or the goal of the discussion for the preparation. We designed the program so the participants and the local youths can share the common experience such as visiting the beaches of Urasoe City or children center in Naha City, and experiencing the traditional performing art, Eisah. As the results of our preparation, through the common experiences as the program proceeds day

after day, local youths and participants got closer and came to interact positively. We found dramatic change of local youths attitude and that made us assured of the outcome of this exchange.

As for meal preparation, since Okinawa has a significant food culture with pork, it was difficult to arrange restaurants which cater food for Muslim people. At the same time we learned how difficult it is for the Muslim people to visit Okinawa. As we had been given opportunity of hosting foreign youth, we were able to be aware of the challenge that our local region had.

Although it was a short time, it brought indispensable friendship with the overseas participants and also new goals to each of us. This experience has become a meaningful one not only for the overseas participants, but for all the committee members and local youths.



## Fumika Kamehama, Discussion Participant

This time I joined the discussion course for Environment and had a meaningful time. In discussion I was able to learn that people from

different background can understand each other fully and can generate new ideas when we ask questions and positively deliver opinions so that everyone

could speak up. Also having the presentation was a great opportunity that I could feel growth in myself. I found that saying something similar to others is not meaningful but it's important to send my message to others.

These five days with the participants were very precious time. Participants had goals and interests and were striving for them. They were also thinking seriously about the future of their countries and global issues with broad views. Most impressively, in

order to solve these problems, they were being engaged in some activities in such fields as art, IT, science, and volunteer activities, those of which they were good at. I was inspired by their awareness of being a part of their society and their proud and rewarded activities. As a medical student, I am going to find something I can do. And in the future, I will become a doctor who is well-studied about Japan as well as the rest of the world, and will engage in the medical field as a member of the society.

### **Mohamed Samir Mohamed Elshahat Awadallah, Egyptian Participant**

Okinawa was the prefecture where I found both the modern and the cultural aspects. From the first moment when we went out of the airport, the city had an outstanding touristic atmosphere and architecture; but with amazing and friendly inhabitants who really could project the genuine culture of Japan.

First, the Egyptians and the Latvians were divided into three groups based on discussion themes. I was a participant of the Cultural Course. On the first day, we went to the JICA building where we discussed thoroughly the similarities and differences about our cultures. The main activity was that each group should write what they thought about other countries. Local members would add more information or correct wrong information in case of any wrong thoughts. Youths in Okinawa started introducing their prefecture and their local culture. They did pretty well. Then, the Egyptians and Latvians turn came. At the end, we really got a

good grasp about each other's countries, and most of the stereotyped wrong ideas were corrected. The added value was really good, and most of us really enjoyed the discussion.

On the second day, the main activity was discovering more about the traditional Okinawa dances, and their musical instruments. Accordingly, we were introduced to an amazing Okinawa traditional music band who taught us how to perform the dancing moves and what kind of moral aspects behind them. It was really an eye opening experience to all of us, because the dance was not just a movement but a unique spirit in Japan. Further, local youths took us around the places at night, and they were really helpful and cooperative with us in discovering more about the Okinawa cultures and traditions.

On the last day, we went to Shuri Castle. The place really reflected the originality of the Japanese history, and had various unique aspects.

