

Preface

In recent years, with the progress of globalization, various problems have been arising one after another that cannot be solved by individual countries. To solve these problems, countries across the world need to cooperate with each other. The cooperative relationship among countries is based on relationship of trust among countries and people. As a result, the significance of international exchange is further growing, which helps promote mutual understanding among countries. Especially for young people, it will be a very valuable opportunity to have the experience of cross-cultural exchange in making an unexpected finding by meeting various people with an open mind and learning firsthand different cultures and ideas with sensibility.

Based on this idea, the Cabinet Office implements various programs of international youth exchange aimed at promoting mutual understanding and friendship among overseas and Japanese youth through their exchanges as well as developing sound young people who have adequate internationality to lead the next generation by broadening their global perspectives.

The International Youth Development Exchange Program (INDEX) in this report was launched in 1994 to commemorate the marriage of His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince. So far a total of 3,471 people have participated in the program. The program was the integration and the developed from of the two original programs; the “Japanese Youth Goodwill Mission Program” launched in 1959 to commemorate the marriage of the then Crown Prince, who is His Majesty the Emperor, and “Invitation of Foreign Youth Program” started in 1962.

In this program, we send Japanese youth on a mission across the world and invite overseas youth to Japan. In addition to the home-staying and the institutional visits on the themes of education, environment and culture, both programs provide the Japanese and the overseas youth with opportunities to be able to discuss across the border and experience together, such as hands-on experience and the exchange of views at the scene of international cooperation activities and the overnight discussion program with the local youth. By having interaction with youth from various countries it has been good opportunities for youth to recognize what universal ideas are like, and to enhance their capabilities to cope with global society. We consider promoting the program to further develop the youth who can play active roles on the global stage in the future.

This report put together the records of various youth activities of the “Invitation of Foreign Youth to Japan Program” in the 22nd INDEX Program carried out in 2015. I hope this report will help you understand the accomplishment of the INDEX program so that you can continue to give us further support in the future.

It is significant that the participating youth in this program engage in international exchange activities and social activities even after the program, by taking advantage of the knowledge and experience they obtained in, and the network they built through this program. The Cabinet Office provides active support for such efforts. We hope the participating youth play increasingly important roles in society in the future.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the concerned governments and groups which have extended their support to this program, as well as to officials of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japanese embassies and consulates, local governments, youth organizations concerned, various facilities and those involved in home-staying and other activities.

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