

# “SWY Unite” Organized by Mexican delegation : Connecting, Collaborating, and Celebrating Together

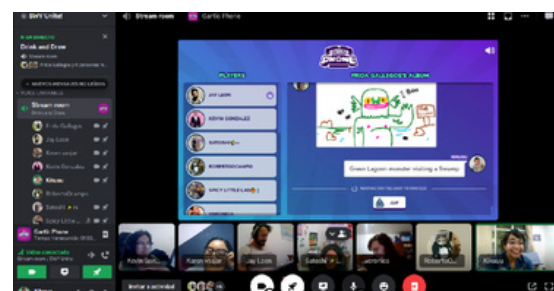
On March 17, 2023, the members of SWY 34 launched the Discord server "SWY Unite," an initiative created to strengthen the bonds within the SWY community. The platform was conceived to stay connected, facilitate the organization and participation in local and international events, and provide a space for sharing experiences, tips, job opportunities, and even elements of entertainment such as food, memes, etc.

To date, "SWY Unite" boasts 168 members, and although simultaneous participation varies, the server remains a constant meeting point. It hosts 25 channels dedicated to different interests and activities, such as channels for news, movie and series recommendations, wellness tips, and event streaming among others.

Over 20 events have been conducted through this platform, including welcome parties for international users, trivia nights, "Drinks and Draw" sessions, weekly movie and series watch parties, as well as the celebration and commemorative workshop for the Day of the Dead. An important aspect of "SWY Unite" is the freedom it offers to ex-PYs to create and promote their own events. This has allowed for a variety of activities, many of which have not been directly organized by the server creators but have been facilitated by the platform's versatility. In summary, "SWY Unite" has evolved into a dynamic and enriching space that reflects the spirit and diversity of the SWY community, fostering connection and mutual support among its members through various activities and gatherings.



Spooky Drink & Draw Participants



Drink & Draw Event

## Guiding New Zealand Delegates: The Orientation Journey

Given the importance of preparing the delegates for their international journey, a two-night noho marae (cultural retreat) was held at Papatūānuku Marae in Auckland. This gathering brought together all 10 SWY35 delegates along with past participants from SWY Aotearoa.

The noho marae provided an immersive cultural environment where delegates engaged in whakawhanaungatanga (relationship-building) and learned more about the significance of their role as representatives of New Zealand. They were briefed on what to expect from their voyage, shared stories with alumni, and participated in team-building activities designed to foster collaboration and leadership.

Workshops focused on:

- Cross-cultural communication: Understanding different cultures and how to engage with diverse perspectives.
- Leadership and teamwork: Activities that strengthen interpersonal skills and resilience.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Learning about the global SDGs and their relevance to the SWY program.
- Cultural exchange practices: Delegates prepared to share New Zealand's culture with other participants and learned about Japan's customs and expectations.

This orientation was not only crucial for preparing the delegates but also helped them bond as a team and get ready for the transformative experience ahead. We appreciate the support of the Ministry of Youth Development and alumni volunteers in making this event successful.



Having Noho Marae for SWY35 delegates

# SWY34 Post-Program Activity: Empowering Peruvian Local Youth

The SWY34 Peruvian Delegation organized a Post-Program Activity to promote cooperation, leadership and empathy among 25 high school students from low-income backgrounds in Barrios Altos District, Lima, Peru.

The activity promoted the SWY values such as 1) To empower local youth, 2) To promote cooperation, leadership, and empathy, 3) To strengthen skills and knowledge and 4) To change perspectives on academic and professional opportunities.

The first session focused on self-knowledge, self-esteem and promoting the SWY program. The second session focused on employability, covering CV writing and interview skills. The students benefited from the activities, which strengthened their skills and knowledge, and they also showed strong interests in exchange programs and scholarships. The Post-Program Activity successfully disseminated knowledge about employability and promoted the SWY mission.



An ex-participant of SWY34 taught the students about employability and job interview skills.



The students were encouraged to participate in the future SWY program.

## Growing Together: South Africa's Mandela Day and Indoor SWY Forest

**Mandela Day:** Nelson Mandela International Day, held on the 18 July in honour of Nelson Mandela, is celebrated in South Africa with acts of service. Several ex-participants engaged in various community service activities on that day.

### A school's play-based activities to help people

Lynn Adams (right, SWY8 and 30), who previously taught at Christel House South Africa (CHSA), continues to volunteer at the school on Mandela Day. She participated as an Alumni member and assisted with some of these activities including music, art and sports, preparing and distributing sandwiches, making recycled sleeping bags, etc.



### Food parcels to families in need

Melanie Naidoo (left, SWY8) prepared a dish known as "bunny chow," and distributed these meals to homeless individuals while traveling to different areas by car. Her experiences involved collaborating with people of various ages and status, without the boundaries.



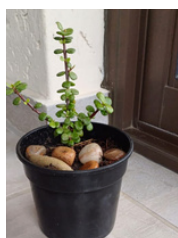
### Blood donation and Food supply

Alex Howard (right, SWY30) donated blood and provided food parcels to families facing difficulties.



### Indoor SWY Forest

Ex-PYs who were unable to participate in the SWY Forest activities, planted "Spekboom" plants indoors at their homes. It is a plant indigenous to South Africa and has a remarkable capacity for sequestering carbon.





# Uniting for Peace: SWYAA Sri Lanka's Ceremony in Memory of Fallen Soldiers

Sri Lanka is a country that suffered a war for 30 years. More than 30,000 members of the three armed forces sacrificed their lives for the sake of the country's solidarity during this era. The Ship for World Youth Alumni Association of Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the National Youth Services Council and Ranaviru Seva Authority of Sri Lanka, organized a Buddhist pirith chanting ceremony to dedicate merit to the war heroes of Sri Lanka at the top of the Sri Pada Temple. This ceremony was held from the evening of December 31, 2022, to the morning of January 1, 2023.

More than 1,000 pilgrims participated in this ceremony, and 4 members of the alumni (DDS Kelum Dasanayaka, Lakmal Weeramanthri, Lahiru Mihiran and Vijitha Suranga, SWY28) helped to provide dinner and lunch to the devotees who came as pilgrims to the top of Sri Pada. Additionally, His Excellency the former President of Sri Lanka, Hon. Gotabaya Rajapaksa, and the former Defense Secretary sent their warm wishes and support to the ceremony.

As SWY alumni, they hope to continue this tradition in the coming years.



Ex-PYs leaving for the summit to support the event



Monks gathered for prayers at the top of Sri Pada.

## Stay Connected: Activities to Share and Contribute - Ukraine

On July 9, 2023, seven Ex-PYs (SWY29) had an online reunion. They reported on their humanitarian activities.

### Documentary Production



Rostyk Kubik produced a documentary with the BBC to convey the real facts on the ground and organized two delegations of doctors from the United States and Israel for Internally Displaced Persons with health problems. The documentary was viewed by approximately 500,000 viewers, and the team of doctors were able to admit 124 patients.

### International Humanitarian Support in Vinnytsia city

Svitlana Yarova worked with the Interregional humanitarian center in support of the IDPS in their socialization in Vinnytsia city, and to meet their humanitarian needs. She also provided for necessities of life line to people who needs in Ukraine such as mobile wash and shower.

### “Kusanone” Program Involvement

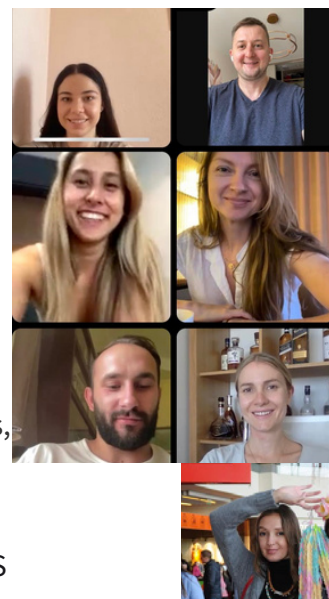
Pavlo Kotenko worked as a coordinator of the Japan funded grant program “Kusanone.” In the framework of activities is support of local needs in spheres of medicine, mental health and veterans rehabilitation, as well as others.

### DEJURE Foundation Activities

Mykhailo Zhernakov headed the DEJURE Foundation for Anti-Corruption, development of law changes and improvements for Ukraine.

### Possibility of holding the Global Assembly

The ex-PYs exchanged views and shared their passion for hosting the Global Assembly in Ukraine in the future.



Online reunion



Pavlo involved in Kusanone program

## SWYAA USA joined JCYC's 13th Annual SF Aloha Run for Hope

The SWYAA USA formed a team of alumni and friends to participate in the Japanese Community Youth Council (JCYC)'s 13th Annual SF Aloha Run for Hope. This activity was a fundraiser for the JCYC, whose mission is to cultivate and enrich the lives of children and youth from diverse, multicultural communities throughout San Francisco and beyond.

The SWYAA USA team had seven participants and seven supporters who ran or walked a 5km or 10km and raised funds through sponsorships. Registration fees came to almost \$400 for JCYC, and those who participated raised an additional \$446.10 in sponsorships.

Proceeds benefitted JCYC scholarship programs, which provide scholarships for low-income, first-generation college students. A portion of proceeds were also donated to the Hawaii People's Fund: Maui Aloha the People's Response, which provided immediate on the ground support to organizations that provide relief efforts to those affected by the wildfire in Maui.



Samantha Lowell and her dog walked around the University of Kansas campus.



Manon Prevost-Mullane walked near her home in Jay, New York.



# Prominent Ex-PYs

## Cross-Cultural Understanding Activity for High School Students (Naiara Martins, Brazil)



Experiencing different cultures



For four months, the ex-PY, Naiara Martins, a Portuguese language teacher for High School at Colégio do Sol, along with teachers in literature, mathematics, history, English, Spanish, physics, and sociology fields, organized a multicultural activity

involving approximately 130 students at Colégio do Sol, a small private school in the Federal District. The objective of the activity was to conduct an in-depth study of socio-cultural, linguistic, and historical aspects of four countries—Australia, Bahrain, Japan, and Mexico—through a cross-sectional examination of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) discussed in the SWY34. With the support of SWY 34 ex-participants TJ Morley-Buchanan (Australia), Yousif Alshams (Bahrain), Yurina Nakatsu (Japan), Kevin Alejandro (Mexico), who sent videos highlighting interesting facts about their nations in English, high school students were challenged to produce official documents regarding their countries' stances on the SDGs, newspapers covering socio-cultural aspects, and creative videos discussing literature from each country.

In the end, students participated in a debate where they were tasked with reaching diplomatic agreements on SDGs-related topics (SDG 4 and 17), using clothing and accessories that represented the countries involved. For the SWYAA Brazil, Naiara Martins' activity is a beautiful translation of how to maintain and develop the SWY spirit across different generations, even among individuals who have not participated in the program, such as children and teenagers.

## Award-Winning Educator and Architect (Henry Tsang, Canada)

Dr. Henry Tsang is an award-winning Canadian educator and architect. He is an associate professor of architecture at Athabasca University and principal of Henry Tsang Architect, based in Calgary, Alberta.

Henry sailed onboard the Nippon Maru on SWY29 in 2017 as the National Leader of the Canadian delegation. His ties to Japan, however, date back to 2002 as the recipient of a MEXT Research Student Scholarship, with which he completed his doctoral studies at the University of Tokyo.

After graduation, he worked as an architect for the Japanese company Nihon Sekkei Inc. until 2012, during which time he collaborated closely with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on numerous official development assistance (ODA) projects worldwide. Influenced by his experience in Japan, Henry's designs and teachings today bridge Japanese and Canadian cultures. One of his most recent projects includes a new Calgary Japanese Community Centre design.

Henry is the recipient of Construction Canada's Emerging Leader Award and the Canadian Architect Award of Excellence, among many other accolades. In 2023, he was inducted into the College of Fellows of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada and named 'Calgary's Asian Changemaker.' During the 2024-2025 academic year, Henry returns to Japan as a visiting professor at the University of Tokyo and Waseda University.



Dr. Henry Tsang, SWY29 National Leader of Canada



Tsang's design for the new Calgary Japanese Community Centre



## Supporting a Visit from the Training Flotilla of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force (Carolina Ugalde, Chile)

Chile had an honor of receiving a visit from the Training Flotilla of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force, with two ships (KASHIMA and HATAKAZE) arriving at the port of Valparaíso. Carolina Ugalde (SWY31) as director of the Nikkei Corporation in Valparaíso Region had an opportunity to participate in different events during these days.

On July 20, 2023, a visit was made to the HATAKAZE ship, in which a reception was held at sunset, where the anthems of Chile and Japan were sung, among other protocol activities. During the reception, the participants enjoyed a photographic exhibition of different visits the ship had and some parts of its history.

On July 22, the Nikkei Corporation held an event “Nikkei Naval Festival 2023,” in coordination with the Training Flotilla of the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force. This event took place at the Seminario San Rafael school, Valparaíso. There were different displays of martial arts by the sailors of the flotilla as well as some Japanese cultural displays and activities.



(Above) At the reception on HATAKAZE  
(Below) At the “Nikkei Naval Festival 2023”

## Hope and Smiles: Kenyan Orphanage (Ilshat Sultanovich, Russia)

Ilshat Sultanovich (SWY28) traveled to the Republic of Kenya for two weeks with several volunteers from Germany during his stay in the Republic of Uganda.

While they were staying in Kenya two Kenyan ex-participants Carolyn (SWY22) and Samatar (SWY27), hosted them in Nairobi. They introduced Raphael Wariero (SWY14) in Mombasa to Ilshat. Raphael has long supported an orphanage near Mombasa city for many years and he invited them to join him in assisting the orphanage. Whilst working with them, they took essential food and were thrilled to give back to those who had welcomed them.

### The orphanage

It is located in a remote area which is challenging to access, especially after the rain washed out the road. Despite several close calls, Rafael overcame the rough road with skilled driving. They soon began music and dance activities with the children, singing and dancing with each other. The children gave a tour of the orphanage, demonstrating how their school and daily life are organized. Ilshat found it heartwarming to see older alumni, who had recently started their adult lives, return to support the orphanage, giving back to the place that had become their home. The visit culminated in a wonderful dinner prepared by the orphanage director and the children, followed by a lively dance session.



Ilshat and Raphael at the orphanage

“To all SWYers planning to visit Kenya, I highly recommend supporting this orphanage. Your contributions can make a significant difference in the lives of these children, fostering a sense of global community and shared humanity.”



# Empowering Tongan Youth through Teaching Dance (Vilami Taufu, Tonga)

Vilami Taufu from SWY 29 started a dance academy for youth in 2018, known as Silapeluuu Academi Dance Group, and teaches Tongan traditional dances and Polynesian dances to young people.

After joining SWY29, he came back to Tonga with the mindset SWY created in him and saw how Tongan youth suffered from unemployment and committed crimes. So he started a dance academy with 5 boys and 8 girls from his province to teach them Tongan traditional dances, singing and piano lessons. Now the academy consists 107 students of different ages from 4 to 30 years old, not only from his province but from all over Tonga.

He says “I believe this academy strengthen the youth of Tonga to embrace our culture and to make use of their time and help them have a sense of belonging, to achieve goals and learn to become leaders of their own. I’d like to help the youth of my country to open their mind and see the beauty in themselves.”

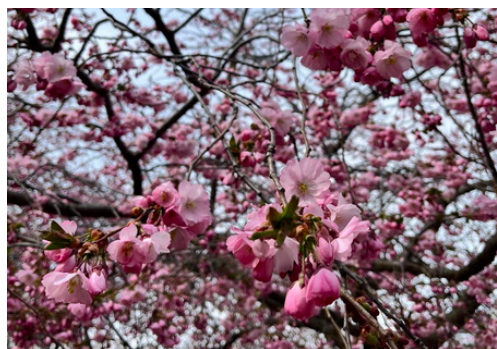


Vilami and his students



Performance of Tongan dance

## Stockholm in Bloom: Celebrating Hanami (Aurora Engfeldt/Louisa Hirvonen, Sweden)



On April 23, 2023, Aurora Engfeldt and Louisa Hirvonen (both SWY34), together with some friends, celebrated the Cherry Blossom Festival co-hosted by the City of Stockholm and the Japanese Association of Stockholm in Stockholm City. This festival was a great opportunity to introduce Japanese culture to people in Sweden.

### Reasons of celebration

The reason they participated in this cherry blossom festival was to raise awareness about Japan among as many people as possible and to support activities that promote knowledge of Japan through its culture.

### The festival

At the festival, there were featured booths where visitors could experience Japanese cuisine, including matcha and sashimi.

Attendees also had the chance to participate in various events organized by the Japanese Embassy in Sweden and learned about scholarships. The Cherry Blossom Festival was very crowded, and the Japanese food booth was especially popular, with a long line of people waiting in line.



Aurora



Louisa

### Shared experiences of SWY program

On the day of the cherry blossom festival, they also had the opportunity to meet Mr. Tomoya Tanaka from the Embassy of Japan in Sweden. They had conversations about daily life in Sweden as well as what they had learned and experienced through the Ship for World Youth Program.

# Global Changemakers Unite: The UNLEASH Experience in Kigali

## (Sarah Chau, United Kingdom)

### UNLEASH

This program brought together 1,000 people from all over the world to try and solve problems facing the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This year, they had participants from 134 countries.



### Participating in the program (December 2-9, 2023)

Sarah Chau (SWY32) decided to participate in this program because she thought it would be a good opportunity to step out of her comfort zone based on her experiences with the SWY program. During the program, participants were grouped based on their preferred SDGs. Each group decided on a problem, think about the user, find a solution, create a prototype, and pitch the solution. The winner was awarded funding and mentor support to initiate their solutions.

### SDG 12: Responsible Production and Consumption

She had a great opportunity to think and work with teammates from different cultures and backgrounds on a topic she was really interested in. They had to pass through pitching and they had a final pitch and had to answer questions before teams were selected for the finals. She struggled with public speaking and even the possibility of this made her incredibly nervous. Also she had to work very closely with people for an intense period meant there were some conflicts. However she said “All of these things took me outside of my comfort zone.”

### Her further step

She would like to work more on/support things like global citizenship and sustainable tourism, especially as she feels that the world is becoming more segregated.



### News from the Secretariat

## SWYAA India President Ravi Chopra Awarded Order of the Rising Sun for Strengthening Japan-India Ties



The Government of Japan conferred the decoration Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays to Mr. Ravi Chopra, President of SWYAA India, for promoting friendship and mutual understanding between Japan and India. The ceremony took place in August 2023 at the Embassy of Japan in India.

SWYAA International has the honor of recommending candidates to receive decorations from the Japanese Government. It wishes to join in celebrating Mr. Chopra's achievements on this special occasion.





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