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SWY NEWS

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Get the latest updates on the
Ship for World Youth program,
exciting alumni activities,
notable ex-participants, and much more!



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Glossary

ex-PY : Former participants of the Ship for World Youth program

GA : SWYAA Global Assembly held every year for alumni

NL : Leader of a national delegation in the SWY program

PPA : Post-Program Activities or Post-Program Activities Session

PY : Participating Youth of the Ship for World Youth program

SWY : the Ship for World Youth program

SWYAA : an alumni association established in each participating country or the collective of all alumni associations as a whole

SWYer : participants and alumni of the Ship for World Youth program

SWY2025 Report

Outline

The Ship for World Youth Program was successfully completed in February 2025. Port of Call Activities were delivered in two different formats. One was Cultural Experience Session aiming to touch Japanese culture, and the other was Project-Based Learning aiming to cultivate problem-solving skills through implementing projects to solve local issues based on the Course Discussion theme.



All NLs and PYs of SWY2025

Participating Countries

Algeria, Australia, Brazil, Djibouti, Egypt, Japan, Oman, Panama, Peru, Poland, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Sweden

Schedule

Online Pre-Meeting

December 7, 2024

Face to Face Program

January 24 to February 21, 2025

*Port of Call Activities in Shizuoka and Shimane



National Presentation to show unique cultures, histories etc.



Discussing social issues and trying to find solutions



Learning new cultures



Welcome drum performance by local citizens in Shimane

PPA (Post-Program Activities)

During the SWY2025 program, a three-part PPA session was held to encourage PYs to take initiative after disembarkation and turn their ideas into action.

In Session 1, ex-PYs from various countries shared real examples of post-program initiatives. Facilitators also reflected on their personal and professional journeys, helping PYs visualize their own paths after SWY.



PYs listening to ex-PYs' stories during Session 1

Session 2 involved brainstorming and developing ideas. PYs first worked individually, then joined interest-based groups (e.g., education, environment, international cooperation) to share and refine project concepts. The session ended with group presentations to seek collaborators.

Session 3 focused on planning. Groups used the 5W1H framework to outline how they would implement their projects, culminating in presentations and video recordings.



PYs brainstorming ideas in groups based on shared interests during session 2



Project presentations during Session 3

Throughout the program, project ideas were displayed in common areas to spark conversation. Ex-PYs engaged with PYs during meals and provided consultation opportunities to deepen discussion.

Nearly 30 project ideas were generated, with 25 shared in Session 2 and 15 further developed in Session 3. Some groups began taking action on board, including filming a YouTube project. Many participants expressed a strong sense of ownership. They discussed both how to sustain their projects after the program and how to engage with SWYAA for continued support.

SWYAA Sweden Hosted the 15th Global Assembly in Stockholm

The 15th SWYAA Global Assembly was organized by SWYAA Sweden and held in Stockholm over 11 days, gathering approximately 120 participants and volunteers from 19 countries and 24 SWY batches (from SWY2 to SWY2024).

The official program (August 3-7) included guided tours to Stockholm's Old Town, City Hall (venue of the Nobel Prize Banquet), and the Vasa Museum. The opening ceremony took place aboard a ship cruising through the Stockholm Archipelago.

Institutional visits and social contribution activities focused on sustainability, equality, and community. Participants visited a recycling facility, explored a major sustainable urban development (Norra Djurgårdsstaden), and worked with locals in



SWYAA Sweden member explaining the Social Contribution Activity to be conducted

an allotment garden. Most activities were conducted on foot or via public transportation, providing insight into everyday life in Stockholm.

Reflecting on the event, Martina Freiholtz, SWYAA Sweden President commented: "It was truly amazing to be able to host GA in Sweden after talking about it for so many years! Our planning committee, volunteers, and participants all contributed to make this a great experience, and I hope we'll be able to host a similar meetup not too far into the future."



Left: Cliff-climbing in the city
Above: Engaging in cleaning-up while strolling in the residential neighborhood

Below: Farewell Dinner with H.E. NOKE Masaki, Ambassador of Japan





SWYAA Country Reports



SWYAA Country Reports

Australia

Pre-Departure Training Weekend in Canberra

In early December 2024, the pre-departure training weekend for the upcoming SWY delegation was held in Canberra. This event marked the first in-person meeting for the new delegates and provided a valuable opportunity for team bonding and preparation.

On Friday, the delegation was graciously hosted by the Embassy of Japan in Australia. Delegates had the opportunity to engage with embassy representatives and participated in an introductory session on Japanese language and culture.

Over the weekend, a series of workshops were facilitated by SWY alumni. These sessions offered insights into the program, guidance on organizing the national presentation, and activities designed to strengthen team cohesion.

Sincere thanks go to the executive team and alumni who generously volunteered their time to support the next delegation. Special appreciation is also extended to the Embassy of Japan in Australia for their warm hospitality and support.



Delegates visit the Embassy of Japan in Australia for a cultural and language orientation session



SWY 2025 Delegates, the SWY Australia Executive team and Alumni members

Bahrain

Spreading Kindness During Ramadan: Iftar Project



Providing nutritious meals for those in need

On April 7, 2024, during the holy month of Ramadan, a heartwarming charity initiative took place in Muharraq, Bahrain, bringing together ex-PYs to serve those in need.

Organized in collaboration with the Muharraq Charity Association, the Iftar Project was launched with the goal of supporting families and individuals facing hardship by providing nutritious meals to break their fast. This act of giving embodied the true spirit of Ramadan compassion, generosity, and community support.

Nearly all Bahraini ex-PYs contributed financially, demonstrating a collective commitment to making a difference. In addition, eight dedicated members took part in the physical preparation and distribution of meals.

Thanks to their efforts, SWYAA Bahrain members successfully raised enough funds to provide around 150 meals, which were distributed across the Hidd and Muharraq areas.

Canada

SWYAA Canada Received the Ambassador's Award from the Ambassador of Japan



Celebrating ties between Canada and Japan (The center of the photo is H.E. YAMANOUCHI Kanji, Ambassador of Japan)



The Conferment Ceremony at the Ambassador's residence in Ottawa

On May 28, 2024, SWYAA Canada was honored to receive the Ambassador's Award from His Excellency YAMANOUCHI Kanji, Ambassador of Japan.

The conferment ceremony was attended by Senator Krista Ann Ross, Members of Parliament Angelo Iacono and Shelby Kramp-Neuman, Mr. Weldon Epp, Assistant Deputy Minister (Indo-Pacific) at Global Affairs Canada, as well as members of the Prime Minister's Youth Council.

Special thanks go to Brandon Wallace and the Embassy of Japan for their continued support of SWYAA Canada.

Several SWYAA Canada members traveled to Ottawa from Toronto, Kingston, Montreal, Calgary, and Lake Placid, NY. In true SWY spirit, alumni from Peru, Ecuador, Bangladesh, Yemen, and Japan also joined the celebration.

Chile

SWYAA Chile Lights Up the Holidays for Families in Need

In December 2024, SWYAA Chile took part in a meaningful holiday project called "Navidad con Sentido" (Christmas with Meaning) in Santiago, Chile.

The event was held in collaboration with the Cuenta Conmigo Foundation, which supports families and young cancer patients at Luis Calvo Mackenna Hospital. The main goal of the project was to bring joy and hope to children and families facing serious illness during the holiday season.

Four ex-PYs were involved in person and their contribution had a real impact. Through the initiative, the team aimed to show that even small gestures, like giving a thoughtful gift, can create big happiness.

"Christmas with Meaning" is about more than holiday cheer. It's about connection, love, and community support. Through their involvement, SWYAA Chile helped spread that message.



Giving presents to children

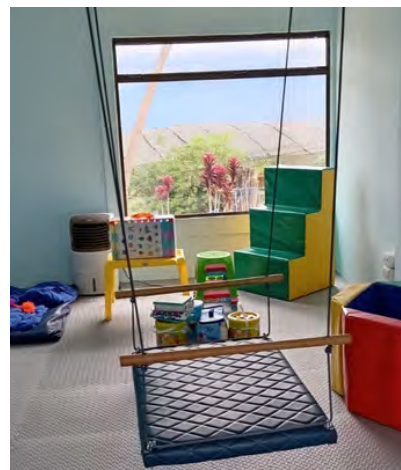


Donating presents from ex-PYs

Costa Rica

Support for the Autism Center for Children in Paraiso

Under the leadership of Manuel A. Sequeira, current President of SWYAA Costa Rica, support was provided to the Rotary Clubs of Cartago, Costa Rica and Denton, Texas in implementing infrastructure improvements at a center serving children with autism. A total of USD 35,000 was invested in renovations, equipment, and scholarships for training local medical staff. These efforts aim to enhance the quality of care available for children with autism in the Cartago region.



Visit the Autism Center for Children

Pura Vida Friendship Forum

SWYAA Costa Rica participated in a forum organized by a former Participating Youth (ex-PY), where President Manuel A. Sequeira gave a presentation on the SWY program to young people and community members interested in Japanese culture.

His talk was one of five featured in the event, all centered around Japan. Other topics included Kendo and the Japanese sword, Zen philosophy, the promotion of the Japanese language, and building business alliances with Japan.



Some ex-PYs attending the Forum

Ecuador

Volunteering at the Food Bank of Quito



Eliana Manangon and other volunteers show the food they collected



50 tuna cans and other non-perishable products were donated to the BAQ

On July 6, 2024, SWYAA Ecuador, in collaboration with the Ecuadorian public university and the Food Bank of Quito (BAQ), organized a Volunteering Day event in Quito.

The BAQ is a nonprofit organization that fights against hunger and malnutrition in Ecuador. The BAQ rescues annually around 4 million kg of food and benefits around 1,000 families. In this context, SWYAA Ecuador supported BAQ's mission in two ways: Monetary donation and volunteering.

On the day of the event SWYAA Ecuador and the team rescued 2,000 kg of food, which represents 5,800 food portions.

First, SWYAA Ecuador collected a total of 75 USD and was able to purchase 50 cans of protein-rich tuna. The tuna cans were handed over to the BAQ at the volunteering event. Although several SWYAA Ecuador members live abroad, they supported the event through donations.

Second, two SWYAA Ecuador members (President and Vice-president) participated in on-site volunteering day to help collecting food donations in the largest wholesale market in Quito, and sorted and organized the donated food in good conditions for consumption.

Egypt

Annual Ramadan Iftar

On March 27, 2024, a total of 42 participants including SWYAA Egypt members and their families, as well as SWYers from Japan and New Zealand, and the Director of the Japanese Culture Center in Egypt—gathered on the banks of the Nile in Cairo to celebrate the annual Ramadan Iftar.

Cultural exchange took place through conversations about Ramadan traditions such as fasting times, customary foods, and traditional drinks for Iftar, as well as discussions on cultural similarities and differences, SWY activity updates, and personal experiences from various SWY batches.



Annual Ramadan Iftar with SWYers and families from Egypt

SWYAA Egypt Meets the Embassy of Japan

On September 29, 2024, four board members of SWYAA Egypt visited the Embassy of Japan in Egypt to meet with His Excellency Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Mr. OKA Hiroshi and the Director of the Media and Culture Center at the Embassy of Japan in Cairo Mr. ITO Toshifumi.

During the visit, the board members introduced the SWY program and shared details about the SWYAA Global Assembly scheduled in Egypt in November 2025. The Ambassador expressed his enthusiasm, particularly about that Egypt will become the first country to host the Global Assembly twice. He was also delighted and impressed by a member's fluent Japanese.



His Excellency Mr. OKA Hiroshi, surrounded by the SWYAA Egypt boards and Mr. ITO Toshifumi

Fiji

SWYAA Fiji Organized the “Hygiene for Health” Project to Empower Rural Women

For rural women, maintaining good hygiene is essential for their health. To support female market vendors in remote areas, the initiative provided hygiene packs containing sanitary pads, soap, and other basic toiletries.

SWYAA Fiji successfully distributed five hygiene packs to rural female vendors who sell their farm products in the open-air section of

Suva Market every weekend.

The distribution of hygiene packs proved to be a meaningful effort, promoting hygiene education and empowering women in rural communities. This project not only addressed basic hygiene needs but also raised health awareness among vulnerable groups within the community.



SWYAA Fiji member Ms. Devina Devi handing over a hygiene pack to a rural female market vendor



A female market vendor happily displays her hygiene pack

India

SWYAA Open School Program

As part of its social development initiatives, the SWYAA Open School project has made a meaningful impact on under-privileged children in India. SWYAA-India has been running an interactive in-school program to support the education of girls enrolled in Municipal Corporation primary schools in Delhi. This initiative is being implemented in partnership with the Department of Education, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, and DISHA. SWYAA India provided digital education and academic support in language, science and mathematics, both in classrooms and digital resource centers, benefiting 286 students aged between 8 and 14 years old. In addition to classroom education, SWYAA India donated essential educational materials.

The SWYAA Open School program has expanded beyond India through collaboration with SWYers around the world. For example, in April 2024, a digital education and computer training program was provided to 22 students in corporation with SWYAA Norway. Moreover, Japanese culture, art, and language were introduced with the support of Sophia University in Tokyo, the Embassy of Japan in India, and ex-JPYs. Through these initiatives, SWYAA India remains committed to shaping young minds and nurturing strong, globally aware future leaders.



1000 Orizuru Crafted by Primary School Students



Japanese Photographic Exhibition and Cultural Sessions

Japan

Gathering Event for Participating Youth from All Exchange Programs Organized by the Cabinet Office

In March 2024, a large networking event was held for participants of the FY2023 International Youth Exchange Programs organized by the Cabinet Office of the Government of Japan. These programs included the International Youth Development Exchange Program (INDEX), the Japan-China Youth Exchange, Japan-Korea Youth Exchange, the Ship for Southeast Asian and Japanese Youth Program (SSEAYP), and the Ship for World Youth Program (SWY).

A total of 49 participants, including former Participating Youth (ex-PYs), took part in the event. They enjoyed food, shared experiences, and discussed PPA. Participants expressed interest in joining more events that go beyond the boundaries of individual programs. Additionally, the new PYs were inspired by the PPA stories of ex-PYs and got some ideas for their own PPA. They also received helpful advice from ex-PYs, which would make their future PPAs more exciting and valuable.

The event was organized by the International Youth Exchange Organization of Japan (IYEO), a nationwide alumni association of ex-PYs from all Cabinet Office exchange programs. IYEO supports new PYs prepare to join the programs and helps ex-PYs stay engaged through PPA and ongoing exchange initiatives.



All participants of the event



Sharing impressions for participating international youth exchange programs

Kenya

Food Distribution Program at Restoration Children's Home

SWYAA Kenya embraced the true SWY spirit by striving to make the holiday season at Restoration Children's Home a cherished and memorable experience. To bring a sense of love and belonging, SWYAA Kenya shared snacks and food, and sang Christmas carols, filling the gap often left by family absence. SWYAA Kenya also celebrated unique talents with thoughtful gifts and helped kids prepare the new school term by providing books and essential stationery.



Preparing supplies for distribution



Providing essential items for children

Beyond festivities, SWYAA Kenya seized the opportunity to impart valuable lessons in personal hygiene, with a special focus on dental care, ensuring every child received a new set of toothbrush and toothpaste. This season of giving was a heartfelt effort to nurture not only happiness but also their wellbeing and confidence for the year ahead.

New Zealand

SWY2024 Aotearoa New Zealand Delegation Reunion

In September 2024, the Aotearoa New Zealand delegation from the 35th Ship for World Youth (SWY2024) program came together for a special reunion.

The gathering provided a meaningful opportunity for delegates to reflect on their shared experiences and explore how to keep the SWY spirit alive within New Zealand. Set near the beach, the reunion offered a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. Delegates spent quality time reconnecting, swimming in the ocean, sharing meals, and enjoying each other's company. These moments of warmth and laughter helped to strengthen the bonds formed during their SWY journey.

In addition to informal activities, the group engaged in thoughtful discussions on how to raise awareness of the SWY program and ensure that future generations of young New Zealanders can access this unique and life-changing opportunity. Ideas included outreach

efforts, community engagement, and promoting the values of international friendship, cultural exchange, and youth leadership.

The reunion concluded with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment to continuing the legacy of SWY in Aotearoa New Zealand.



SWY2024 Aotearoa New Zealand delegation, group photo before departing reunion

Oman

3rd SWY Weekend - Musandam, Oman

On December 19–21, 2024, SWY Oman hosted the 3rd SWY Weekend, bringing together 35 alumni of the Ship for World Youth (25 Omani and 10 international participants), representing five countries and twelve batches. The event aimed to enhance communication among SWYers (ex-PYs), promote cultural exchange and tourism, and contribute to community development through youth dialogue and collaboration.

The three-day program took place in the beautiful Musandam Governorate, overlooking the strategic Strait of Hormuz. It included a mountain tour by 4x4 vehicles, a traditional cruise through Musandam's bays and a visit to the historic Khasab Fort. One of the highlights was a brainstorming workshop titled "Musandam, Gateway to Beauty," where participants and local youth discussed tourism development ideas for the region. Five recommendations—such as creating a dedicated visual identity for the governorate to promote tourism—were submitted to the Office of the Governor of Musandam.

This regional gathering served not only as a platform to reconnect ex-PYs living in the Gulf region but also to deepen their engagement with the local community and culture. Participants expressed their appreciation for being able to contribute to the development of Musandam alongside local residents.



"Musandam, Gateway to Beauty"
sustainable tourism workshop



Group photo of the participants

Peru

SWYAA Peru at the AELU Matsuri



SWYAA Peru proudly participated in the Central Matsuri Parade on November 11, 2024, celebrating the 125th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Peru.

The parade took place at the La Unión Stadium Association (AELU) in Lima and drew a crowd of over 20,000 attendees.

SWYAA Peru members marched in the parade, carrying banners and flags representing their organization. They were joined by other organizations, businesses, and Nikkei associations from across the country.

The parade was a vibrant and festive celebration, featuring colorful floats, dancers, musicians, and various performers who showcased the rich cultural heritage of the Japanese-Peruvian community.



▲ SWYAA Peru
on the annual
Matsuri parade

◀ Final photo,
alongside the
new peruvian
delegation for
SWY2025, before
sharing sake

South Africa

Mandela Day 2024

Mandela Day is an annual global celebration held on July 18 to honor the life and legacy of Nelson Mandela. It is a call to action for individuals, communities, and organizations to reflect on Mandela's values and principles, and to make a positive impact in their own communities.

(<https://www.mandeladay.com/>)

In Cape Town, Lynn Adams (SWY8, SWY30) joined Christel House South Africa in their food parcel drive, supporting families in need through the distribution of essential supplies.

Firdous Khan (SWY30) participated in activities organized by ELRU, which included collecting and distributing winter clothing for vulnerable families, resource packs for early childhood development centers, and sanitary towels for a charity supporting teenage mothers.

As Principal of Port Natal School, Dennis Beukes (SWY8) mobilized students and staff to clean the school grounds and surrounding areas. The school also collected and distributed non-perishable food items to two children's homes in their community.



Lynn Adams preparing food parcels at Christel House



Some of the winter wear collected for families in need by ELRU's initiative

Spain

Ambassador Nakamae's Invitation to Meet SWYAA Spain's New Board



The members of the new board with the ambassador of Japan

From left: Eme Cuervo (Vice President), Paloma Sotillo (President), Mr. NAKAMAE Takahiro, Alberto Medina (Secretary), Álex Martínez (Treasure)

The Ambassador of Japan to Spain, Mr. NAKAMAE Takahiro, kindly invited SWYAA Spain to the embassy for a formal meeting with the newly appointed Board of Directors. During the visit, the delegation provided updates on the Ship for World Youth (SWY) program, which the Ambassador was already familiar with, and expressed interest in collaborating on upcoming activities initiated by the embassy.

The discussion also covered the selection process for future youth participants who may represent Spain in the program. The meeting was both productive and enjoyable, with Ambassador Nakamae showing genuine interest in the SWY program and its ongoing impact.

Türkiye

Celebrating 100 Years of Türkiye–Japan Relations through Youth Dialogue and Cultural Exchange



Deputy Consul General with SWY alumni



Deputy Consul General giving a speech about Türkiye–Japan relations

The year 2024 marked the 100th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Türkiye and Japan. Through the efforts of SWY2024 alumnus Ferdi Dumandağ, the Embassy of Japan in Ankara officially recognized SWY2024 as a centennial event.

To commemorate this milestone, Ayşe Süreyya Özavar (SWY2024) organized the “Friendship Diplomacy Gathering” at Marmara University in cooperation with the student group “Fikir Talimi Kulübü,” attracting nearly 60 undergraduates from international relations, communication, and Asian studies.

The event featured welcoming remarks by Özavar and a keynote address by Deputy Consul General NOMURA Takeshi, highlighting historical ties—from the Ertuğrul frigate voyage in 1890 to today's strategic partnership—and emphasizing the importance of youth exchanges like SWY. An interactive Q&A session allowed discussions on scholarships and collaboration. Alumni shared personal SWY experiences, enhancing participants' intercultural awareness.

The gathering concluded with networking, exchange of centennial-logo pins, and ideas for student-led projects. A survey revealed 88% felt more motivated toward Japan-related studies or volunteering. Mr. Nomura received traditional Turkish ebru artwork as a token of appreciation. Participants expressed enthusiasm to extend SWY's spirit into campus activities.

United Kingdom

SWYAAUK Summer Social 2024

On August 10, 2024, SWYAAUK hosted an open summer social in central London. A group of ex-PYs from the UK and France met to catch up and exchange stories and photographs from different years aboard the Nippon Maru. Looking through personal collections and official printed SWY from SWY6 and SWY10, the photographs really brought to life that connection between past and present generations of SWYers.

The group then entered the British museum and headed to the Japanese Galleries where the exhibits evoked more amazing memories of SWY journeys, and participants discussed their hopes of returning to Japan.

After enjoying the museum, the ex-PYs took a short walk to Oxford Street for lunch at the Market Halls. Here, while sampling a number of different cuisines from various countries around the world, the conversation turned to the future. Participants discussed what is next for SWYAAUK, sharing ideas and details of upcoming independent projects, and considering how they might forge stronger connections with their closest neighbouring SWY Alumni Associations: France and Ireland.

It was an extremely pleasant afternoon which proved that the SWY spirit lives on through generations of ex-PYs, and that there is still much work to do in widening the SWY network and connecting Alumni Associations for future projects.



Group photo of participants of SWYAAUK Summer Social 2024



A reminder of the wonderful SWY days at the Japanese Galleries



Prominent Ex-PYs



Prominent Ex-PYs

Brazil

Cultural Exchange at Naiara's Japanese Language Class



Students from Naiara's class warmly welcomed Yurina and her friend Nanami

A Post-Program Activity was held in collaboration with Naiara Martins (SWY26), Yurina (SWY Hybrid), and her Japanese friend Nanami, during a Japanese Language and Culture class at Colégio do Sol.

This extracurricular project was specially created to promote multicultural learning among students and to foster interest in Japanese language and culture. For a month, the group had been preparing to host the visitors, and their efforts reflected a thoughtful blend of Brazilian and Japanese cultural elements. The students crafted their own meishi (business cards) and presented on topics such as Brazilian culture, society, and the national education system.

These student-led presentations demonstrated great enthusiasm and a deep interest in cross-cultural exchange. Yurina and Nanami introduced key aspects of Japan's history, geography, and cultural traditions in an engaging and accessible way. Their session featured interactive activities, including quizzes, which sparked curiosity and encouraged active participation from the students.

The dynamic exchange captured the essence of the SWY program—promoting multilingual dialogue, cultural empathy, and genuine mutual understanding.

Mexico

Strengthening Mexico-Japan Relations through Maritime History and Youth Exchange (SWY)

On December 7, 2024, SWYAA Mexico, in collaboration with the National Institute of Historical Studies on the Revolutions of Mexico (INEHRM), held a discussion titled "Fraternal Ties Across the Pacific" at INEHRM's headquarters in Mexico City.

The event explored the historical and cultural relationship between Japan and Mexico, emphasizing the role of the Ship for World Youth (SWY) program in strengthening bilateral ties.

INEHRM representative Eduardo Monroy presented on key historical milestones, including the 16th-century Manila Galleon trade, the 1888 Treaty of Amity, and the 1897 Enomoto Mission that marked the beginning of Japanese migration to Mexico.

SWY alumni Jocelyne Castellanos (SWY32) and José Luis Reyes (SWY17) shared personal insights on how the SWY program, backed by the Japanese government, promotes international cooperation and cultural understanding among young leaders.

The hybrid event attracted a broad audience and generated strong interest in Japanese culture and exchange initiatives.



Official event poster



SWYAA Mexico members at the event in Mexico City

Norway

From Youth Exchange to Diplomatic Dialogue: Meeting with the Japanese Embassy

Lillian Solheim from SWY21, President of SWYAA Norway, who served as a facilitator during SWY Hybrid and SWY2024, held a meeting with the Ambassador of Japan to Norway, the Deputy Head of Mission, and the Cultural Attaché, in Oslo.

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce SWYAA Norway, highlight its recent contributions to the program through facilitation in SWY Hybrid and SWY2024, and discuss the upcoming 125th anniversary of Norwegian-Japanese diplomatic relations, which is celebrated in 2025.



Deputy Head of Mission MATSUMAE Hajime (right), Cultural Attaché OTANI Kana (left) and Lillian Solheim (middle).
Photo credit: Henrik Bardum



Embassy of Japan in Norway

Russia

Ilshat Earns His PhD with Global SWY Support

Ilshat Sharafutdinov from SWYAA Russia has successfully earned PhD in English Linguistics from the University of Regensburg (Germany), after completing his research project titled “Segmental Variation in English Non-Native Accents in Russia: The Influence of Some Local Indigenous Languages.” True to the spirit of SWY, Ilshat’s academic journey was supported by SWY friends from around the world. Emma (SWY15 & 28, Australia) and Garreth (SWY28, New Zealand) generously contributed their time and expertise by proofreading the dissertation. Other SWYers showed their support in person, travelling to Regensburg for the defence – Mehmet Durna (Türkiye), Alina Lotfullina (Russia) and ISHIDA Yuko (Japan).

Congratulations to Ilshat on this important milestone, and special thanks to all the SWYers who were part of the journey!



Celebrating Ilshat’s PhD achievement together

Ukraine

Humanitarian Coordination Activities



Ms. Yarova (center) during the boat ride with children

Throughout the year 2024, Svitlana Yarova, an SWY alumna and coordinator at the Interregional Humanitarian Coordination Headquarters, organized activities for more than 3,600 children affected by the war — including children of fallen soldiers, prisoners of war, and internally displaced families. These included cinema outings, summer camps, visits to zoos, paddle boat rides, planetarium, theater, and museums.

In addition, Yarova led the launch of the Support Space for Women and Children Affected by the War in 2023–2024, which remains active and recorded over 9,000 visits last year.

U.S.A.

Taishya Adams Elected to the Boulder City Council in Colorado

Taishya Adams (SWY11, SWY17 NL) was elected to the Boulder City Council in Colorado in November 2023 and began her term in December. A servant leader dedicated to community building, systems change, and personal transformation, she focuses on sustainable water, energy, and food systems. Taishya is an educator, environmentalist, climate and social justice expert, outdoor enthusiast, musician, and entrepreneur. She is the CEO of the Mukuyu Collective, LLC, which builds climate and cultural resilience with community at the center.

Her public service extends beyond the City Council. She served on the Colorado Parks and Wildlife and is a founding member of the Outdoor Opportunity Initiative. Her previous roles include, acting chair of the NOAA National Marine Sanctuary Business Advisory Council, and representative on the Colorado Natural Areas Council. Locally, she sits on the Resource Conservation Advisory Board and the Boulder Police Oversight Panel. She also serves as liaison to Sister Cities in Nablus, Palestine, and Yateras, Cuba, and as a board member for the Boulder Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Through her leadership, Taishya exemplifies the SWY spirit of global citizenship and local impact.



Swearing-in ceremony for Boulder City Council members



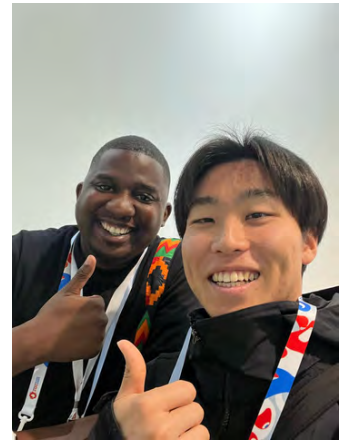
Taishya Adams with campaign manager and her children

Meet SWYers at Osaka EXPO

From April 13 to October 13, 2025, the Osaka-Kansai Expo was held in Japan. Many SWYers from around the world were involved, as pavillion organizers, volunteers or visitors, each contributing in their unique way. Some ex-PYs shared impressions of joining the Expo.

Seeing fellow SWYers working at the pavillion was truly inspiring. When I visited the Expo, I had a chance to meet SWYers from Japan, Zambia and Bahrain—even though we had never met before, we quickly identified each other. There were over 150 countries at Expo, so of course, my batch countries have their own pavillions! After visiting the Expo, I couldn't wait to message my friends around the world and say, "I visited your country!"

(Asahi, SWY33 & SWY2024, Japan)



During my visits to the Expo, I had the opportunity to meet my SWY batch mates from Bahrain and Chile, and also met a new one from Japan! One of them, Yuki, was even working in the Brazilian pavillion, which made me very happy! It was a great opportunity to strengthen existing connections and expand my ties with other SWY batches!

(João, SWY32, Brazil)



I was working at the Brasil Pavilion at the Osaka Expo 2025. It has been an extraordinary experience meeting guests and staff from around the globe with learning cultures from various countries. It was like a mini SWY on land! Also it was very nice to see multiple SWYers from various batches coming to visit the Brasil Pavilion!! Once again a huge thanks to them!!

(SWY31 Yuki, Japan)



Through the Osaka Expo, SWYers were not only able to learn about the cultures, histories, and cutting-edge technologies of various countries, but also to build new connections among SWYers. Ex-PYs look forward to seeing more activities and relationships emerge by making the SWY network.



Tonga

Viliami Taufu's Dance Academy Performs at Osaka EXPO

In April 2025, Viliami Taufu, an ex-PY from SWY29, and his dancers traveled from Tonga to Osaka to perform at the opening of the Osaka EXPO.

Representing the vibrant spirit of Polynesian and Tongan culture, the group captivated international audiences with their powerful and authentic performances.

The dancers are part of the Silapeluua Academy Dance Group, founded by Viliami to engage youth through traditional dance and cultural expression. What began as a local initiative to empower young people in Tonga has grown steadily, with more youth joining the academy and embracing their cultural heritage.

Their participation in Osaka EXPO marks a significant milestone for the group, showcasing their talent on a global stage and promoting cultural exchange through the art of dance.



Silapeluua Academy Dance Group



Viliami and other members

News from the Secretariat

SWYAA Solomon Islands Former President Awarded Order of the Rising Sun for Promoting Bilateral Friendship and Mutual Understanding



The Government of Japan has conferred the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, on Mr. Francis Deve, former President of SWYAA Solomon Islands.

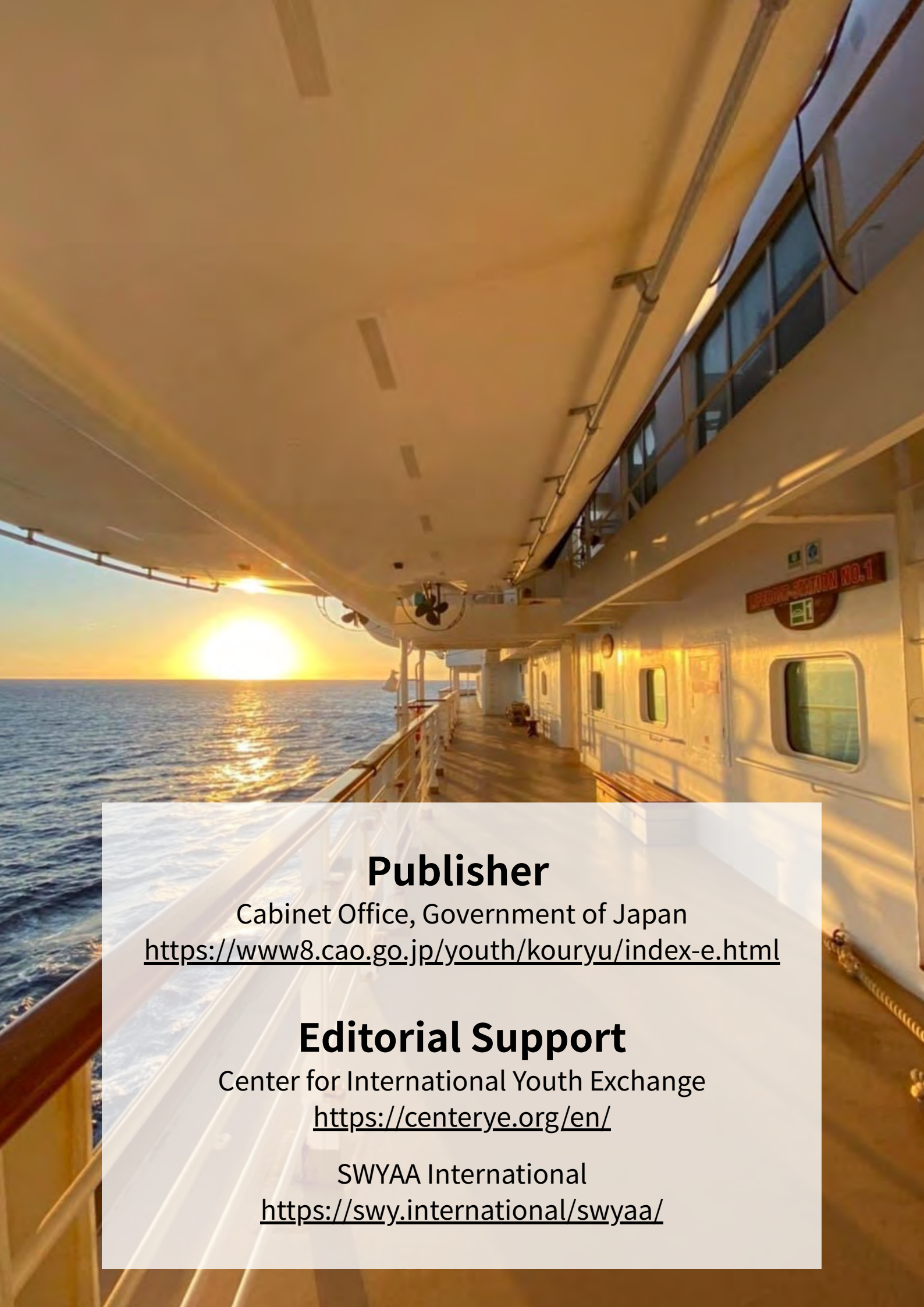
A former National Leader of SWY11, he has long served as a bridge between Japan and the Solomon Islands.

Based in Honiara, he works in the hospitality and tourism industry as a hotel professional and tour guide, and also assists in activities related to World War II remains.

The conferment ceremony is scheduled to take place in December 2025 at the Embassy of Japan in the Solomon Islands.



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



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<https://www8.cao.go.jp/youth/kouryu/index-e.html>

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