

Preface

In recent years, as globalization proceeds, various problems that cannot be solved by individual country have been arising one after another, and Nations should act together to solve problems at international level. The cooperation of countries is based on trust among countries and people. Thus, the importance of international exchanges to promote mutual understanding is further growing. In particular, it is a very valuable opportunity for young people 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, Cabinet Office implements various programs of international youth exchange aimed at promoting mutual understanding and friendship among overseas and Japanese youths through their exchanges as well as developing young people with global perspectives to lead the next generation.

The International Youth Development Exchange Program (INDEX) was launched in 1994 to commemorate the marriage of then His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince, by the integration of two original programs; the “Japanese Youth Goodwill Mission Program” launched in 1959 to commemorate the marriage of the then Crown Prince, and the “Invitation of Foreign Youth Program” started in 1962. So far, a total of 3,788 people have participated in INDEX.

In this program, we send Japanese youth delegation across the world and invite overseas youths to Japan. In addition to the home-staying and the institutional visits, on the themes of various global issues in three regions; Europe & Africa, North America & Central America & South America, Asia & Oceania, those programs provide both Japanese and overseas youths hands-on experience and the exchange of views at the scene of international cooperation activities and the intensive discussion program with local youths. Exchanges with overseas youths are good opportunities for Japanese youths to recognize what universal ideas are like, and to enhance their capabilities to cope with global society. We will continue to improve the program for Japanese youth who will play an active role in the global society in the future.

This report is the record of various activities of INDEX carried out in 2019. I hope this report will help you understand the INDEX and we expect your continuous support.

It is significant that the participants in this program are engaging in international exchange activities or 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. Cabinet Office provides active support for such efforts. We hope the participants will play important roles in society in the future.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the foreign governments and organizations that 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, various facilities and those involved in home-staying and other activities.

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International Youth Development Exchange Program

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