

The International Youth Development Exchange Program (INDEX) 2023

Chapter 1 Outline of the International Youth Development Exchange Program

Chapter 2 Online Exchange Program

Chapter 3 Tokyo Program

Chapter 4 Regional Program

Chapter 5 Participating Youth Questionnaire Evaluation

Chapter 1

Outline of the International Youth Development Exchange Program

1. History

The International Youth Development Exchange Program (INDEX) was developed on the occasion of the Imperial Succession in 2019 from the “International Youth Development Exchange Program” reorganized in 1994 to commemorate the marriage of Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress, based on the integration of the following two original programs: the “Japanese Youth Goodwill Mission” that was launched in 1959 to commemorate the marriage of Their Majesties the Emperor Emeritus and Empress Emerita, and the “Invitation of Foreign Youth to Japan” that began in 1962.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the “Japanese Youth Goodwill Mission” is to develop youths with global perspectives in line with today's increasingly complex global society, by setting themes of issues of various regions around the world and dispatching Japanese youths to two countries addressing such issues to conduct case studies. In 2023, the themes were utilization of information technology (IT) and responding to the disaster and climate change.

The purpose of the “Invitation of Foreign Youth to Japan” is to promote mutual friendship and understanding among youths of Japan and other countries, through discussions on the selected themes above to help deepen their understanding. It also aims to nurture youths who can demonstrate leadership in various fields in the global society and who will contribute to the social activities by broadening their global perspectives in each region of Japan and by fostering the spirit of international cooperation and developing their ability to put it into practice.

3. Outline of the International Youth Development Exchange Program

(INDEX) 2023

(1) Japanese Youth Goodwill Mission

1) Countries to visit and number of youths

Country to visit	Number of Japanese Participating Youths
I. European region: Republic of Estonia	13 (1 leader, 1 sub-leader, 1 coordinator, and 10 youths)
II. Latin America and the Caribbean region: Dominican Republic	15 (1 leader, 1 sub-leader, 1 coordinator, and 12 youths)
	Total 28

2) Schedule

Period	Activities
Wednesday 5 to Saturday 8, July 2023(4 days)	Preparatory training session (intensive)
Sunday 16 and Sunday 23, July 2023(2 days)	Preparatory training session (online)
Saturday 2, September 2023 (JST) (1 day)	Online exchange for Dominican Republic, Republic of Peru and Japan
Sunday 3, September 2023 (JST) (1 day)	Online exchange for Republic of Estonia, Kingdom of Denmark and Japan
Wednesday 4 and Thursday 5, October 2023 (2 days)	Pre-departure training session
Friday, October 6 to Sunday, October 15, 2023 (10 days)	Activities in Republic of Estonia
Thursday, October 5 to Sunday, October 15, 2023 (11 days)	Activities in Dominican Republic
Monday, October 16 to Thursday, October 19, 2023 (4 days)	International Youth Conference
Friday, October 20 to Saturday, October 21, 2023 (2 days)	Post-program training session
Saturday, February 17, 2024 (1 day)	Online Reporting Session

(2) Invitation of Foreign Youth

1) Invited countries and the number of youths

Region	Invited country	Number of Overseas Participating Youth
I. European region	Republic of Estonia	8 (1 leader and 7 participating youths)
	Kingdom of Denmark	8 (1 leader and 7 participating youths)
II. Latin America and the Caribbean region	Dominican Republic	8 (1 leader and 7 participating youths)
	Republic of Peru	8 (1 leader and 7 participating youths)
		Total: 32

2) Invitation period

11 days from October 15 to 25, 2023

3) Activities in Japan

The Overseas Participating Youths attended the International Youth Conference during their stay in Japan. Moreover, with the Japanese Participating Youths, they visited facilities related to the two themes, which are utilization of information technology and responding to the disaster and climate change, and had discussions on them. Subsequently, they visited Iwate and Wakayama Prefectures and held discussions with local youths, and shared joint experiences such as traditional cultural experiences.

[Theme] Utilization of information technology (Republic of Estonia, Kingdom of Denmark)

Responding to the disaster and climate change (Dominican Republic, Republic of Peru)

Date	Program contents	
Sunday, October 15	Arrival in Japan	Orientation and dinner party for the Overseas Participating Youths
Monday, October 16	Tokyo Program (Narita)	Morning: plenary orientation Afternoon: cultural experience
Tuesday, October 17	International Youth Conference	Thema-based discussion

Date	Program contents	
Wednesday, October 18	Tokyo Program (Narita) International Youth Conference	Morning: Theme-based Site Visit [Utilization of information technology] Fujitsu Learning Media Limited [Responding to the Disaster and Climate Change] Western Chiba prefectural Disaster Prevention Center Afternoon: theme-based discussion, cultural exchange meeting
Thursday, October 19	Tokyo Program (Narita) International Youth Conference	Morning: results presentation, ending ceremony, evaluation meeting Afternoon: reception, regional program orientation
Friday, October 20 – morning of Monday, October 23	Regional program	[Republic of Estonia, Kingdom of Denmark]: Wakayama Prefecture [Dominican Republic and Republic of Peru]: Iwate Prefecture
Afternoon of Monday, October 23 – Tuesday, October 24	Tokyo Program (Tokyo)	Tour of Tokyo and farewell party
Wednesday, October 25	Returning to their home countries	

Chapter 2 Online Exchange Program

1. Outline of Online Exchange

In this program, online exchanges were conducted on a thematic basis, considering the time difference between Japan and the other countries, in order to deepen the friendship between the Overseas and Japanese Participating Youths and to help achieve a smooth face-to-face exchange program.

On Saturday, September 2, the Japanese and Overseas Participating Youths from the Central and South America region (the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Peru), met online and discussed the theme of "Responding to the disaster and climate change." On Sunday, September 3, the Japanese and Overseas Participating Youths from the European region (the Republic of Estonia and the Kingdom of Denmark), met online and discussed the theme of "Utilization of information technology." They also introduced themselves and their countries, before exchanging their opinions on the themes.

2. Online Exchange for the theme on “Responding to the Disaster and Climate Change” (Dominican Republic, Peru and Japan)

◆Date and Time

JST	: Saturday, September 2, 2023 9:00 - 12:00
Dominican Republic time	: Friday, September 1, 2023 20:00 - 23:00
Republic of Peru time	: Friday, September 1, 2023 19:00 - 22:00

◆Number of Participants

Japanese Delegation	:15(including a leader, sub-leader and coordinator, and 12 Japanese Participating Youths)
Dominican Republic Participating Youths	: 8
Republic of Peru Participating Youths	: 8
Facilitator	: 1
Executive members and interpreters	: 6

◆Program contents

JST	Contents
9:00 - 9:15	Opening, explanation from the facilitator Greetings from the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan
9:15 - 9:50	First session: Self-introduction
9:50 - 10:40	Second session: Introduction of your own country (Conducted in breakout rooms)
10:40 - 10:50	Break
10:50 - 11:45	Third session: Exchange of ideas on the set themes (Conducted in breakout rooms)
11:45 - 12:00	Closing Greetings from the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, and program liaison

Melting glaciers

The Pastoruri glacier has shrunk by half in the last 20 years

Important source of water for Peru

Sea levels rises and coastal flooding becomes more likely

▲Presentation by the Peruvian Youths, highlighting examples of climate-related disasters in their country

3. Online Exchange for the theme on “Utilization of Information Technology” (Estonia, Denmark and Japan)

◆Date and Time

JST : Sunday, September 3, 2023 16:00 - 19:00

Kingdom of Denmark time : Sunday, September 3, 2023 9:00 - 12:00

Republic of Estonia time : Sunday, September 3, 2023 10:00 - 13:00

◆Participants

Japanese Delegation :13(including a leader, sub-leader and 11 Japanese Participating Youths)

Republic of Estonia Participating Youths : 8

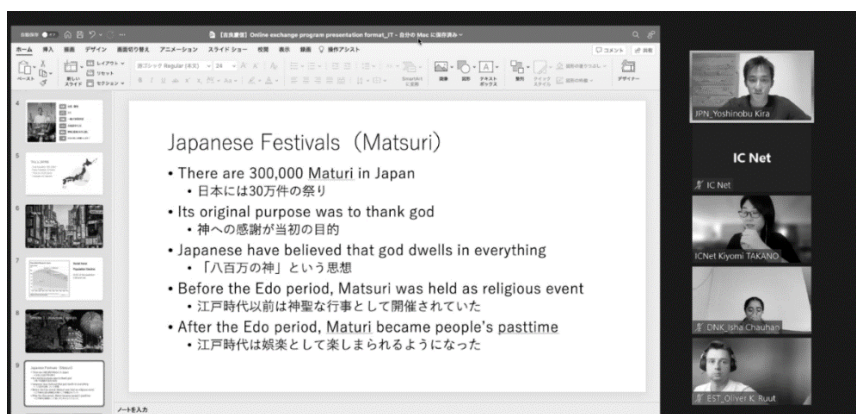
Kingdom of Denmark Participating Youths : 8

Facilitator : 1

Executive members and interpreters : 6

◆Program contents

JST	Contents
16:00 - 16:15	Opening Greetings from the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan
16:15 - 16:50	First session: Self-introduction
16:50 - 17:40	Second session: Introduction of your own country (Conducted in breakout rooms)
17:40 - 17:50	Break
17:50 - 18:45	Third session: Exchange of ideas on the set themes (Conducted in breakout rooms)
18:45 - 19:00	Closing Greetings from the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan and program liaison



◀Introduction to Japan by
Japanese Participating
Youths

Chapter 3 Tokyo Program

1. Outline of Tokyo Program

The Overseas Participating Youths arrived in Japan on October 15 and attended the International Youth Conference in Narita from Monday, October 16 through Thursday, October 19. The Conference addressed two themes. The Participating Youths from Estonia, Denmark and Japan discussed the theme "Utilization of information technology" and visited the theme-based facility together. The Participating Youths from Dominican Republic, Peru and Japan did likewise on the theme "Responding to the disaster and climate change." On Thursday, October 19, all the Participating Youths met in the plenary session for the presentation of the outcomes of the four-day activities.

After returning from the Regional Program on Monday, October 23, the Overseas Participating Youths took part in the Tokyo site visit and the farewell party, before they left for their home countries on Wednesday, October 25.

2. Program and Schedule

Date	Time	Program
Monday, October 16	9:00 - 10:00	Plenary orientation
	10:00 - 10:45	Theme-specific orientation
	12:30 - 16:00	Cultural experience (Visit to Naritasan Shinshoji Temple)
Tuesday, October 17	9:00 - 11:45	Theme-based discussion
	13:30 - 17:00	
Wednesday, October 18	9:30 - 12:00	Theme-based Site Visit
	14:30 - 17:00	Theme-based discussion
	18:30 - 20:30	Cultural exchange meeting
Thursday, October 19	9:00 - 12:30	Presentation of the outcomes
	12:30 - 13:00	Evaluation meeting and course completion ceremony
	13:00 - 14:30	Reception party

Date	Time	Program
Friday, October 20 - Sunday, October 22		Regional program
Monday, October 23	AM	Transfer
	PM	Tokyo site visit
Tuesday, October 24	9:00 - 11:00	Tokyo site visit (Imperial Palace)
	11:45 - 13:15	Farewell party
	13:40 - 18:00	Tokyo site visit (Asakusa and Tokyo Sky Tree)

3. Outline of "Utilization of Information Technology" Course

◆Theme:

Utilization of information technology

◆Course objectives:

In recent years, digitalization has advanced in industries, and the utilization of IT has become an essential element of society as a whole. The objectives of the course are to, while keeping in mind Goal 9 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of "Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation," deepen the participants' own thoughts on the promotion of the utilization of information technology throughout the entire society including government agencies, educational institutions, and private companies, through visits to relevant organizations in a foreign country, case studies, and discussions among the youths of different countries, and to form worthwhile opinions together through these exchanges.

This year's International Youth Conference focused on the promotion of IT in educational settings. In Japan and elsewhere, the use of IT such as online learning and digital teaching materials is progressing. Moreover, an increasing number of young people are starting businesses by the use of digital platforms, cloud services, and other information technologies. The importance of support to these young entrepreneurs by educational institutions and society as a whole is widely recognized. After consultation with the facilitators, it was decided that the Participating Youths of the International Youth Conference would share some leading examples of their own countries and work to develop together new IT-based business plans in the field of education.

◆Theme-based Site Visit on Wednesday, October 18, 2023:

Fujitsu Learning Media Limited

◆Course staff:

Facilitator : MURASHIMA Ryoichi

Committee member: OMORI Kaede

Committee member: SATO Sachiko

Committee member: TOKURA Atsushi

Committee member: NAGO Asami

Summary of the Activities by MURASHIMA Ryoichi,

Facilitator

As an approach to visualize and commonly share the diverse experiences and knowledge of the participating youths with focus on the utilization of information technology in education, a group discussion was set up to create new IT-based businesses in the field of education. The participants were divided into four groups to develop new EdTech business plans (a coined word combining education and technology) for launch in the participating countries of the Republic of Estonia, Kingdom of Denmark, and Japan, learning from the success stories of EdTech businesses in their own countries. Each group gave a slide presentation of the discussion summary during the presentation of the outcomes.

In the course of the group activity, each group looked at the leading examples such as Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) education and IT learning for working people, and discussed plans for next-generation EdTech businesses, clarifying the target countries, target customers, service categories, service

contents, delivery solutions, business models, marketing strategies, etc.

In the theme-based site visit, we visited the training center of Fujitsu Learning Media Limited, a major education service provider that offers a wide range of training services for companies and individuals. We were introduced to specific examples such as training programs for business people focusing on digital transformation (DX) human resource development as well as the programming school for children aimed at developing information and communication technology (ICT)-oriented human resources. In addition, Ms. INOUE Mina, who started her own business in Estonia in 2020 when she was a fifth grader with the help of the Fujitsu Learning Media's Children Challenge Program, was invited to share her EdTech-related activities with the participating youths. We gained many insights and suggestions about starting a business from a global perspective.

At the presentation of the outcomes session, each group used an executive summary of its discussions to show its plan for EdTech-related businesses it developed. The proposed business plans were all very original and highly feasible. They included: a platform service that provides tools and case examples for elementary school teachers in Japan to assist in the use of IT in their classes; a service that provides gamification materials to help handicapped people improve their skills; a service that supports educational administration agencies and teachers to improve their productivity by creating teaching guides and materials using artificial intelligence (AI); and a learning support service that uses interactive AI to bridge the digital divide, including the use of smartphones by the elderly.

Despite the difficulty in coordinating opinions among the members of diverse national traits, values, and views, the group did not give up until the end, as defined by time constraints. Communication was well maintained to build consensus in the group, which led to the excellent proposal at the final presentation of the outcome. It was very impressive to see the participants put forward their respective views politely and clearly, while respecting the opinions of the other participants. I hope that the young participants will continue the relationships they have nurtured through the International Youth Conference and become energetic global leaders of the new era.



▲Presentation of each group at Fujitsu Learning Media Limited, as part of a theme-based site visit

KOBAYASHI Kasane,

Japanese Participating Youth Dispatched to the Republic of Estonia

When the International Youth Conference was about to begin, I was not confident and was very nervous. Unlike my fellow participants, who had a lot of international experiences and were fluent in English, I was not good at English and it was my first time to participate in an international exchange. I was chosen only because I was involved professionally with the theme of utilization of information technology. Although I applied for membership, hoping to build upon my experience of having created my own apps, the English language barrier prevented me from doing so. However, I have taken a great step forward as an international person as a result of the conference.

Most of my fellow Participating Youths in Group D had abundant experiences. As I recall, what bolstered my courage was the suggestion by one of the overseas participants that each member confess his or her “guilty pleasure” as an ice breaker. My fellow participants reacted in many ways, which made me enjoy sharing thoughts with others even though the languages are different. Then, I began

to sense the depth and width of the discussions with overseas participants of different backgrounds. I had never had such rewarding discussions before. Gradually, I learned to put forward objective facts together with my own views. When the use of augmented reality (AR) was discussed, I introduced an AR app I had created earlier and explained how it worked. The desire to communicate with the overseas participating youths drove away my worries about my English-speaking ability, and I found myself expressing my ideas with confidence.

The exchange with the Overseas Participating Youths was truly unforgettable from the start till the end. When I finished the presentation on behalf of the discussion group, the Overseas Participants gave me very warm words. That spurred me to gather courage for playing a more active role in the international community. I would like to continue having many more exchanges in order to become an active player on the world stage.

WADA Kenichiro,

Japanese Participating Youth Dispatched to the Republic of Estonia

The International Youth Conference was held from October 16 to 19, 2023. I had the opportunity to have thematic discussions with Overseas Participating Youths and make thematic visit and cultural exchanges. If I am to describe the mental awakening that hit me during this period, it would be "communication."

Before the International Youth Conference adjourned, I had thought that communication ability was the ability to put forth my views precisely. As I look back, it is hard to say that I was able to express my thoughts precisely in English during the discussions and cultural exchange. However, I am sure that I was successful in

communicating what I wanted to convey to the Overseas Participating Youths during the four days of various exchanges. During the discussions, everyone understood what I wanted to say when I drew illustrations on the whiteboard. We all gathered in a room and did a Dominican Republic dance together. There were many such moments when we could really relate and communicate with each other. When interacting with others, we need to be mindful of what we want to talk about and the use of language. However, we would feel excessively timid and cautious if that attention went too far. In a case like this one, it is possible

that the English language itself could be overemphasized. Through the International Youth Conference, I have learned that in the field of "communication," it is important to have a strong will to communicate, and there are non-verbal communication tools and body language such as dance. I came to realize that the power of communication includes the element of how passionate you are about it. Following this realization, I am more strongly motivated to study English and other foreign languages as a communication tool. I am grateful for the opportunity.

Oliver Kristopher Ruut,

Overseas Participating Youth, Delegation of the Republic of Estonia

I had the privilege of representing Estonia at the INDEX 2023. For me the program kicked off in Estonia, where we had the opportunity to meet our Japanese counterparts in Telliskivi. There, we immersed ourselves in the culture by dancing Estonian folk dances and trying the Sõran Bushi.

The next day, we travelled to Japan with the Japanese delegation. We also met the Danish delegation at Vantaa Airport. On the second day, the conference began. We were divided into smaller groups and my group focused on the issue of enhancing the quality of education by increasing the digital literacy of teachers. As part of this conference, we also had the opportunity to exchange IT utilization experiences and learn about our school systems' differences during fruitful discussions. Our group came up with a solution to create a platform to support educators in this endeavour.

Following the successful conference, the regional

program unfolded and we ventured to the beautiful Wakayama Prefecture, where we saw how technological solutions make services and production more efficient. This part of the program was a highlight for most of us. We explored tangerine fields and a tangerine sorting facility, visited ICOM Inc. relaxed in onsens, and spent the night in a traditional old-style Japanese house. Two of the most memorable events for me were the Fire Festival of Inamura and the Cultural Event at Akadama restaurant, where we ate some of the best food we had in Japan. On behalf of everyone, I wish to thank Mr Misumi-san for planning such a wonderful regional program. I can speak for everyone if I say that we had a wonderful time.

After our time in Wakayama we returned to Tokyo, where we had the chance to explore the city and reconnect with Japanese youths. At the farewell lunch, we had the pleasure of meeting the former ambassador to Estonia, Mr. Hajime Kitaoka, and

the Business and Investments Officer from the Estonian embassy, Mr Oliver Ait.

I'm incredibly grateful for this opportunity and extend my heartfelt thanks to the Cabinet Office of Japan for introducing us to Japan. We met wonderful people and experienced incredible hospitality. I forged lasting friendships during this program, and while we explored two prefectures,

there are 45 more waiting to be discovered in Japan. This trip gave us just a taste of Japan, and we're already looking forward to returning as soon as possible. The Japanese youths have invited us, and we're eager to continue our cultural exchange, explore more of this beautiful country, and deepen the friendships we've made along the way. Japan has left a lasting impression on us, and the journey is far from over.

Marie Elisabet Strøyberg,

Overseas Participating Youth, Delegation of the Kingdom of Denmark

Starting of our eventful journey from Copenhagen Airport, the Danish delegation met for the first time, ready to embark on the adventure ahead. Excitement and anticipation filled everyone as we looked forward to the next 12 days and being part of the INDEX program 2023 in Japan.

During the initial days in Narita, we met with the delegations from Estonia, the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Japan. Daily conversations across diverse cultures and nationalities provided a unique opportunity to learn about each other's countries. It was my first time meeting people from Estonia, the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Japan making this experience particularly enriching. Sharing insights about language, politics, cuisines, and a lot more created a wonderful exchange of ideas and thoughts.

Our cultural experience in Narita began with a visit to the Naritasan Shinso-ji temple, where a monk guided us through meditation and Japanese calligraphy. The third evening featured a cultural exchange, showcasing each delegation's dances, foods, and drinks—an event that stood out as one of my favorites from the entire trip.

In Narita, we split into two groups: the Danish, Estonian, and Japanese delegations focused on the Utilization of Information Technology, while the Dominican Republic, Peru, and Japanese delegations delved into Climate Change. Engaging in discussions highlighted differences in IT use between Japan and European countries, offering valuable insights into Japanese school institutions and work life.

On the final day in Narita, each group presented solutions to IT and Climate Change issues, showcasing impressive results and diverse perspectives on critical societal challenges.

The subsequent three days took us on a regional excursion to the Wakayama prefecture. Traveling by shinkansen train, we enjoyed scenic views, including a glimpse of Mount Fuji. Visiting ICOM, a company specializing in walkie talkies with advanced robotic technology, provided a fascinating look into modern manufacturing.

Our stay in a traditional Japanese folk house added a cultural touch, with cozy moments under a warm kotatsu, sharing stories with our Japanese

guide. Dinner with the local youth who were very eager to learn more about the Danish and Estonian cultures allowed us to share insights and knowledge.

The following day brought unique experiences like making paper and fans from rice water, a visit to the AQ fruit company, and attendance at the Fire Festival of Inamura along with traditional Japanese dances and flamenco. The festival has been held annually since 1854, why it was such an honor for us to attend along with the local community.

Meeting the youth of Wakayama, exploring Yuasa, and visiting the Inamura fire house museum deepened our understanding of local life and preparedness for tsunamis.

Our regional trip concluded with a visit to Wakayama Castle, offering breathtaking views of the city. A courtesy visit to the Wakayama prefectural office provided an opportunity to share our trip experiences with the officials and

coordinators of the program.

The final two days in Tokyo included visits to the Imperial Palace, Tokyo Sky Tree, Asakusa, Shibuya, Harajuku, and more. At the farewell party, leaders of the delegations delivered impactful speeches on behalf of all of us concluding the INDEX program.

In summary, this trip was more than a cultural exchange—it provided profound insights into other countries, cultures, IT, politics, and the environment. The knowledge gained will undoubtedly contribute to both my private and professional life. The respect shared by our host country and co-delegations is remarkable and is one of the most enduring memories I will carry from this journey. The academic growth and friendships formed during this journey are invaluable, and I look forward to meeting my new friends again one day.

4. Outline of "Responding to the Disaster and Climate Change" Course

◆Theme:

Responding to the disaster and climate change

◆Course objectives:

The course was designed to, while keeping in mind Goal 13 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts," help deepen understanding of disasters caused by climate change, and to discuss what reconstruction measures are considered feasible from the standpoint of international youths. The objectives of the course were to engage in discussions to improve the ability to listen respectfully to the opinions of others, to develop the skill of communicating one's own opinions clearly to others, and to acquire discussion skills as an international player to promote constructive discussions.

◆Theme-based Site Visit on Wednesday, October 18, 2023:

Western Chiba prefectural Disaster Prevention Center

◆Course staff:

Facilitators : KOBAYASHI Hana and SUHARA Atsushi

Committee member: ASAHINA Chizuru

Committee member: OHMURA Yukika

Committee member: MUTO Shuntaro

Committee member: MATSUKI Toshihiko

Summary of the Activities by KOBAYASHI Hana and SUHARA Atsushi, Facilitator

Natural disasters have been increasing in number and scale in recent years. In particular, weather-related disasters such as heavy rain, typhoons, hurricanes, floods, wind and snow, droughts, and cold summer damage caused by climate change have caused major damages not only in Japan but also in other parts of the world. Various agreements have been created through international discussions, such as the Paris Convention on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. We increased our understanding of these international agreements in the context of achieving the SDGs, and discussed what can be done to address climate change, weather disaster preparedness, disaster response, and reconstruction.

The participants from three countries, namely, Japan, the Dominican Republic, and the Republic of Peru, had very different views on the kinds of natural disasters they are focused on and saw problems in, partly owing to the differences in geographical conditions. The Japanese participating youths showed a strong interest in earthquakes and accompanying tsunamis, which are not meteorological disasters but can cause significant damage. The Dominican youths focused on storm and flood disasters such as hurricanes, while the Peruvian youths focused on glacial melting in the Andes and the resulting river flooding. Thus, it was difficult to discuss specific types of disasters. It was necessary to delineate challenges that are common to us all. Since one objective of this course was to provide opportunities to deepen mutual understanding by

listening to the opinions of others as well as by expressing one's own opinions in the discussion, consideration was given to setting themes and creating an environment conducive to vibrant discussions.

In the discussion, four groups of internationally-mixed participants were formed. Each group discussed "Public assistance, mutual assistance, and self-help" in disaster response. Regarding public assistance, the participating youths simulated the tasks of government officials based on a case example to think about disaster response measures in a town. With respect to mutual assistance, they discussed how to address anticipated challenges in an evacuation center following a disaster outbreak. As for self-help, the participants gave thoughts to possible individual disaster response, following a tour of the Western Chiba prefectural Disaster Prevention Center that included experiencing of simulated earthquake and storm and handling fire extinguishing devise.

In the final presentation of the outcomes from the three-day discussions, the group outlined what can be done to enhance preparedness, to provide response in the wake of a disaster outbreak, and to implement reconstruction for each of the stages from the perspective of public assistance, mutual assistance, and self-help. At the beginning of the discussion, some participating youths were rather reluctant to express their opinions due to differences in knowledge and expertise regarding climate change and disaster management. As the discussion progressed, they began to actively express their thoughts, accept different views, and

consolidate them into a group consensus. The fruit was presented at the presentation of the outcomes. It is hoped that the participants will make great strides in the international community, taking advantage of the experience of reaching a conclusion by respecting and understanding each

other despite the differences in their backgrounds, interests, and expertise.



▲At the theme-based site visit to the Western Chiba prefectural Disaster Prevention Center, Overseas Participating Youths experience an earthquake

NAKANO Asahi,

Japanese Participating Youth Dispatched to the Dominican Republic

It was a very significant experience for me to have exchanged words with youths of the same generation from the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Peru on the theme of disaster under this program. I experienced the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami as a child in Thailand. I spent several days in a shelter. That memory still lives on, but I have had few opportunities to discuss disasters with others, not to mention foreign people of similar ages.

Through the International Youth Conference, I have come to realize that my fellow participating youths from overseas shared the same sense of crisis about disasters, although we all grew up in different, distant places. I felt this most strongly in one act of the discussion. Our team formulated a simulative evacuation plan from typhoon for a town in Japan. We all agreed to issue an evacuation advisory before the typhoon arrives. I was a bit surprised because I had expected that people from different countries would have different opinions. We, who grew up in areas frequently hit by

disasters, were all aware of the horror to the same extent. It was also impressive to hear from a participating youth that his family had repeatedly told him about the damage caused by landslide.

When we watch the news of a disaster in a distant country, we tend to feel that it is something of

another world because we don't know the normal life there. However, the experience I had this time has allowed me to recall that there are people out there who are suffering just as we were in a disaster. It is a small difference, but I will cherish this insight.

MATSUBARA Mizuki,

Japanese Participating Youth Dispatched to the Dominican Republic

The International Youth Conference brought together highly motivated and professionally knowledgeable young people from various countries, and we had meaningful exchanges.

Through this discussion on disaster and climate change, I realized very strongly that education plays a very important role and that Japan is advanced in this regard and has much to transmit to other countries. For example, probably all students in Japan experience evacuation drills in the course of compulsory education. But it is not something taken for granted in other countries. Through the discussions and the visit to the disaster prevention center, I understood that how prepared people are in advance for a disaster is closely related to the damage caused when a disaster actually occurs.

We discussed various topics other than disasters and climate change, too. They were really diverse, stretching from culture to language, laws, education, and value systems. Through these discussions and dialogues, I felt that our mutual understanding and friendly relations among the countries involved have deepened. I repeated the process of listening to the stories of other countries, learning how Japan looks like to the young people from overseas, and conveying my own views about Japan to them. It was not only an opportunity for me to learn about other countries, but also a good opportunity for me to rethink what Japan is to the world and how I perceive Japan.

Junior Alexis Villanueva Rosario,

Overseas Participating Youth, Delegation of the Dominican Republic

When I'm queried about my participation in the International Youth Development Exchange Program 2023, my response consistently underscores its profound and transformative impact on my life.

The genesis of the impact of this journey can be traced back to my childhood, where I found myself deeply immersed in Japanese culture through pathways such as Wado Karate, anime, music, and philosophy. The adventure started in my home country, the Dominican Republic, when I had the privilege of hosting one member of the Japanese Delegation as part of the homestay program. Upon my arrival, despite the rainy weather on that Saturday, their palpable enthusiasm resonated with me; a mutual excitement manifested as a palpable energy exchange. My host, Alisa Yatsu-San, a sharp, disciplined and committed young woman, proved to be a thoughtprovoking companion. Our interactions delved into profound discussions encompassing social, cultural, and climatic considerations, enriching our perspectives from both personal and cultural standpoints.

On October 15th, after a 19-hour flight, we landed at Narita Airport in Tokyo and proceeded to the hotel to join fellow delegations from Peru, Estonia, and Denmark. The ensuing days unfolded with a tapestry of cultural experiences, from visits to Naritasan Shinshoji Temple and Sakurayama Shrine to onigiri-making sessions at the Tono Civic Center, karaoke engagements in Rikuzentakata, explorations of the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, ascents of the Tokyo Sky Tree, and forays into diverse shopping and local destinations.

Beyond the surface allure of these excursions, a shared reality confronted us — the vulnerability of our respective countries to natural disasters. Despite our cultural diversity and culinary commonalities, the threat of earthquakes, typhoons, and, in the case of Peru, volcanoes, cast a somber shadow over our collective experiences.

To address this shared concern, in Tokyo we undertook several discussion about different disaster situations where we shared our experience from past events in our respective countries and visits to key institutions, including the Seibu Bousai Center in Matsudo. Here, we assimilated crucial knowledge about fire safety, evacuation protocols, flood and earthquake response measures.

Our itinerary then led us to the Iwate Prefecture in the Tohoku Region, the epicenter of the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake, or Great East Japan Earthquake. Cities like Morioka, Ofunato, Rikuzentakata, and Tono, once ravaged by the earthquake and subsequent tsunami, became classrooms where we absorbed invaluable lessons. We engaged with local heroes at the Tono Fire Station Headquarters, the Tono City Logistics Support Museum, the Rikuzentakata Community Hall, The Miracle Pine, and the East Japan Earthquake Tsunami Memorial Hall.

The lecture in Rikuzentakata left an indelible mark, illustrating the unwavering resilience of a community that, despite facing devastation, rebuilt itself with renewed strength. Witnessing the logistical efforts of the people in Tono, who not only sent equipment but also bestowed hope and

fortitude upon the affected areas, reinforced my admiration for their resilient and unbreakable spirit.

The bittersweet nature of this experience emerges as I reflect on the state of readiness in my homeland. The stark reality is that we, too, are susceptible to the ravages of climate change, with increasing typhoons and a dormant tectonic plate harboring untapped energy for almost a century. Lamentably, we lack museums and memorials to preserve the lessons of past natural disasters, a gap that hampers our collective preparedness due to the fact that the most recent significant natural disaster occurred in 1998, the current generation has not encountered such a calamity, and a considerable portion of my contemporaries has regrettably overlooked the gravity of the events experienced during that tragic period.

This interchange, therefore, assumes heightened importance as a platform to exchange experiences and glean best practices in handling emergencies. Our objective must be to learn not only from successes but also from past errors, fostering a collective resilience to avert future calamities. I extend heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Japan for extending the invitation to the Dominican Republic, the dedicated staff members,

especially Shintaro Tachihara, Ui Yamada, and Daryoosh Haziq for dedicating considerable effort towards effecting positive improvements, the Japanese Youth Delegation for their warm hospitality, for attending to the welfare of each one of us and dedicating your time in our company. Special appreciation goes to the Peruvian Delegation for their knowledge-sharing and, notably, to our Team Leader Yamel Peña for exemplary coordination and dedication. To my esteemed teammates in the Dominican Delegation: Yamila Kohan, Tadaichi Uda, Jazmin Melo, Jhonayri Vasquez, Rosanna Alvarez, and Eusebio Castro. I express profound appreciation for being integral to this unforgettable journey and for the joyful moments we shared.

I have cherished my time in Japan, and it has been a truly enriching experience. I sincerely hope for the opportunity to return in the future. Please accept my deepest gratitude for your hospitality, sharing your knowledge and the memories we've shared. Arigato Gozaimasu!

Nelly Jazmín Doñes Cachique,

Overseas Participating Youth, Delegation of the Republic of Peru

Purpose

Comprehensively document the experiences and reflections derived from the program, detailing the learning acquired during the development of activities in each city visited. This report will focus on both cultural and educational aspects, highlighting the connections between both dimensions. We will seek to highlight the lessons learned, the significant moments and the impact on personal and professional growth.

As a participant in the International Youth Conference, I feel deeply grateful for this experience that turned out to be enriching in all aspects. From the first day, the commitment of each of the participants was evident. I learned a lot about Japanese culture and the warm society that characterizes it.

I was amazed by each and every place we visited in Chiba Prefecture, from the Shinshoji Temple where I was enchanted by the architectural and historical beauty; We learned about Shakyō and Zazen as important practices of the Buddhist religion and how they perceive the universe through it, to the disaster prevention center in Matsudo, where we learned what actions to take in case of a fire, which was interesting and brand new.

At the end of the first stage of the program, we experienced one of the most exciting moments: the cultural exchange dinner. During this event, the 6 participating delegations such as Denmark, Estonia, Dominican Republic, Japan and Peru, showed a little more about our culture and traditions through dances and captivating artistic performances.

During the regional program, I was able to see firsthand how natural disasters can create so much damage in our lives, from the emotional to the material. However, I also learned that thanks to these experiences we can build a resilient society, and that this gives us the opportunity to improve as people and value our lives and the lives of those around us.

In each group discussion, we entered a world full of various procedures, sometimes facing common situations, but which are often not considered in government plans, which made us realize how much we still have to learn and the importance not to overlook details that could cause harm.

During our stay in Iwate Prefecture, we were able to learn more about how Japanese society, after the earthquake and mega-tsunami of 2011, stepped up and works every day to prevent, as far as possible, a similar loss in the future. It was encouraging to learn about his 3 management, how the city of Rikuzentakata was able to recover little by little, to see the memorial museum that allowed us to look at the past so as not to forget, and to project ourselves into the future, preparing ourselves for any adversity and the hope of a better tomorrow.

Each of the stages of the program was a wake-up call for someone who comes from a country that still has a lot to improve in this sense, and that thanks to this program can now have something more to offer its society from a global perspective and with a new perspective of what we could achieve.

Conclusions

In summary, my participation in the International Youth Conference in Japan has been an extremely valuable experience. From day one, the collaboration of each participant and the opportunity to immerse myself in the rich Japanese culture have left a lasting mark on my perspective and personal development. Active interaction in discussions on global challenges, especially natural disaster management, not only expanded my knowledge but also generated a desire to apply this knowledge to real-world situations.

The rapid and effective intervention during emergency situations, thanks to the collaboration between the local community and the relevant authorities, highlights the importance of solidarity and joint action. Although losses cannot be completely avoided, experience has underscored the continued need for collaborative efforts to address and mitigate impacts.

Ultimately, I am grateful for this unique opportunity, and eager to take the learnings acquired to my community and contribute positively to the well-being of my country.

Chapter 4 Regional Program

1. Outline of Regional Program

The Overseas Participating Youths were divided into two groups and participated in regional programs from Friday, October 20, to Monday, October 23, 2023. The youths from the Republic of Estonia and the Kingdom of Denmark visited Wakayama Prefecture under the theme "Utilization of information technology," while those from the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Peru visited Iwate Prefecture under the theme "Responding to the disaster and climate change." The Overseas Participating Youths, together with the local committee members, interacted with local youths in various places, experienced local culture, visited facilities related to their themes, and participated in lectures and experience programs. Based on the lessons learned there, the Overseas Participants had discussions with young people participating from the local community on the themes, and they completed the program with a courtesy visit.

2. Wakayama Prefecture

◆Schedule

Date	Day of the week	Time	Plan
October 20	Friday	9:21 13:15 14:15 14:30 - 16:00 17:00 18:00	Departure from Tokyo Station Arrival at Wakayama Station Moved to Arida area Tour and lecture at Wakayama Icom Inc. Arrival at old folk houses Cultural exchange meeting
October 21	Saturday	9:00 9:10 - 10:30 10:30 - 11:00 11:00 - 12:00 13:00 - 14:30 14:30 - 16:00 17:30 20:00	Departure from accommodations Cultural experiences such as Japanese paper making experience and fan making Visit to Aragi Island Lunch AQ fruit sorting field tour, lecture Visit to tangerine fields Attending Fire Festival of Inamura Arrival at hotel
October 22	Sunday	9:00 9:30 - 11:30 11:30 - 12:30 13:00 - 14:30 14:30 - 16:00 17:00 18:00 - 20:00	Departure from hotel Yuasa Regional Exchange Center • Discussion and presentation of results Lunch Strolling in Yuasa Town Traditional Preservation District Learning about tsunamis (Inamura-no-Hi no Yakata) Arrival at hotel Farewell party
October 23	Monday	9:00 9:00 - 10:00 10:30	Departure from hotel Wakayama Castle tour Courtesy visit to Wakayama Prefectural Office

Representative Report by FUJIOKA Seisaku, the Arida Block Director of the Kaiyukai

Wakayama Prefecture received 16 participating youths from the Kingdom of Denmark and the Republic of Estonia from October 20 to 23. The theme this time was "Utilization of information technology." It was a difficult task to deal with the youths of the two countries, which are advanced IT countries in the world. However, with the cooperation of local companies in two sectors, agriculture and telecommunications, the event provided us with an opportunity to learn and deepen exchanges together with Japanese youths.

On the first day, they arrived in the afternoon and joined the local youths accompanying them, visited a telecommunications equipment manufacturing company, and inspected IT utilization sites. They were very interested in cutting-edge technology and management systems utilizing IT. We chose old folk houses featuring Japanese traditional architecture for accommodation on the day. The group was divided into three buildings, including an old folk house that was built over 150 years ago and designated as a cultural property, and they seemed very excited about the inns. Moreover, a cultural exchange meeting was held at night, and dances of each country were performed, and local kagura and lion dance were performed by the Japan side, which became a very exciting cultural exchange.

On the second day, the youths learned about the use of IT at a mandarin orange joint fruit selection center under the theme of using IT in the agricultural sector, followed by a tour of mandarin orange cultivation in terraced fields designated as a Japanese agricultural heritage site, and deepened exchanges with the local youths. On this night, there was an event related to "Inamura no hi" (Fire in Inamura), a famous short story by KOIZUMI Yakumo, and 16 overseas participating youths participated as special guests in the torch procession, which was picked up by the mass media and played some role in promotion of local activities.

The third day was a discussion day, where we discussed a lot about the IT activities we learned and experienced over the two days. As they talked about the situation and circumstances of each country, their global perspective seemed deepened. In the afternoon, they visited traditional buildings and exchanged with the local youths, and in the evening, they held a farewell party to reflect on the fruitful training and exchange. On the last day, they paid a courtesy visit to the prefectural office and reported on their achievements. It was a busy and exciting four days, but I hope that the Japanese youths who interacted with them and the name of Wakayama in Japan are deeply engraved in their hearts.



▲ Farewell party with staff from the Wakayama Prefectural Office, Wakayama IYEO, and local youths

Representative Report by Kristiina Valk, Delegation of the Republic of Estonia

Hello! My name is Kristiina, I'm the member and the leader of the Estonian delegation and I have the honor of sharing gratitude on behalf of the Estonian delegation. Thank You very much for making it possible for us to be a part of the 2023 INDEX program and contribute to international cooperation, learning and development. These recent days have been irreplaceable experience in terms of sharing knowledge and fostering fruitful relationships and cooperation with youth from Japan, Peru, Dominican Republic and Estonia. It has been an irreplaceable experience for us. Starting from youth conference in Narita and ending up with regional program in Wakayama where we could see ICOM electronics, tangerine fields and factory and the famous fire festival where

for the first time in our lives we could see culturally sacred dances and Japanese flamenco. Your kindness and dedication to the program, meeting both foreign and local youth has brought memories, connections and knowledge that will serve us in further lives. Once again, thank your international youth exchange organization, Wakayama prefecture and the government office of Japan on behalf of the ministry of education and research, Estonian education and youth board and also on behalf of Estonian delegation for the contribution and the opportunities we have gained through index program.



▲Visit to Aragijima as nationally important cultural landscape

Representative Report by Isha Ajay Chauhan, Delegation of the Kingdom of Denmark

Hello everyone and thank you for this opportunity. My name is Isha, studying International Business in Asia specializing in Japan at CBS and I have the honor of being the Leader of the Danish delegation.

Our delegation consists of: Daniel, computer engineering student, from Copenhagen. Emilie, studying cultural sociology at University of Southern Denmark in Esbjerg, western part of Denmark. Frederik, studying business administration and specializing in Digitalization and business development. Marie: digital innovation & management (IT university of Copenhagen). Marie, medicine student, from Aalborg in the northern part of Denmark. Oscar, student in Political Science with a special interest in data analysis and technology Pernille, studying

Digital Design and Interactive Technologies at the IT University of Copenhagen.

We have spent these last few days being introduced to the culture and businesses here in Japan. With our various backgrounds and perspectives we have interacted with the Youth representatives from Estonia, Dominican Republic, Japan and Peru. These interactions have allowed us to bond and create irresistible relationships.

The time we have spent together, learning and sharing about the Disaster prevention, Fujitsu Media Learning Center, ICOM telecommunications and AQ Fruit Selection Factory, which allowed us to have interesting conversations about IT's role in further developing these areas.

The cultural program has been amazing. Seeing the Naritasan temple, staying at a traditional Japanese home, trying Onsens as well as having the chance to participate in the Inamura Fire Festival. We had an incredible time walking the route and watching the traditional performances at the shrine.

It has been an experience of a lifetime. We are truly grateful to you all to have making this possible.

On behalf of our delegation we would like to express our gratitude to the Cabinet Office, IYEO, Iwate Prefecture, Wakayama Prefecture and ICNet for this Program.



▲Making Washi paper and fan using Washi paper as a part of cultural experience

3. Iwate Prefecture

◆Schedule

Date	Day of the week	Time	Plan
October 20	Friday	10:44 13:01 After arrival 13:30 - 15:30 15:30 - 16:00 16:00 - 18:00 18:00 21:00	Departure from Tokyo Station Arrival at Morioka Station Bus transfer Orientation at Sakurayama Shrine Bus transfer Preparation for welcome party Welcome reception party Arrival at hotel
October 21	Saturday	9:00 11:30 - 12:30 12:30 - 13:30 13:40 - 14:30 14:45 - 15:00 15:15 - 15:30 15:30 - 17:00 17:30 18:30	Departure from hotel (bus) Lunch (lunch box) at Rikuzentakata Community Hall Lecture by the Disaster Prevention Section Activities of Disaster Prevention Experts by East Japan Earthquake Tsunami Memorial Hall Site visit (1) Miracle Pine Place of remembrance and wreath-laying Site visit (2) East Japan Earthquake Tsunami Memorial Hall Arrival at hotel Dinner
October 22	Sunday	8:30 10:00 - 11:30 11:45 - 12:15 12:45 - 13:05 13:05 - 13:50 14:00 - 15:30 16:00 - 16:30 16:45 18:00 18:30	Departure from hotel Tono City Headquarter of Tono Fire Station Explanation of Logistical Support for Disaster Area Walking transfer Site visit Tono City Logistics Support Museum Bus transfer Rice ball "Onigiri" making experience (soup kitchen) with local people at Tono City Civic Center Lunch Thematic discussion Walking transfer Site visit Tono Children's Book Forest Bus transfer Arrival at hotel Dinner (within Morioka City)
October 23	Monday	9:00 10:00 12:50	Departure from hotel Courtesy visit to Iwate Prefectural Office Departure from Morioka Station

Representative Report by FUJINAMI Daigo, President of International Youth Exchange Organization of Iwate

The Iwate Program of the FY 2023 Cabinet Office International Youth Development Program was held from October 20 to 23. The 16 youths from the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Peru participated in the program, and 15 local youths from Iwate participated in the program and accompanied them with Iwate IYEO members.

The theme of the program was "disaster prevention." A welcome party was held at a hotel in Morioka City on the first day, followed by the theme-based site visits and lectures on the second and third days.

During the program in Rikuzentakata City on the second day, we heard from employees of the city's Disaster Prevention Section and disaster prevention masters (experts) about the disaster prevention activities at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake and afterwards. That evening, we enjoyed the local cuisine and interaction with local youths at the street stall village of Kyassen Ofunato in Ofunato City.

On the third day, they visited the inland city of Tono to learn about logistical support during disasters. We chose the sites other than the tsunami-affected areas of the Great East Japan Earthquake as study sites, because we wanted the

Participating Youths to know about places that serve as hubs for disaster relief and support and the importance of logistical support. In Tono City, along with lectures on logistical support, participants experienced making onigiri in times of disaster together with local residents, and held discussions on disaster prevention.

I feel that the participating youth actively learned about disaster prevention and enjoyed interacting with the people of Iwate until they left Morioka Station for Tokyo, after their courtesy visit to the Iwate Prefectural Office on the fourth day.

As Iwate IYEO, we feel it was very good that the participating youths learned about the experiences, knowledge, and know-how of disaster prevention in Iwate, and that we have created opportunities for international exchange in Iwate Prefecture. I would be very happy if the participating youths would return to their home countries and take advantage of the knowledge and experience they have gained in Iwate for their countries, regions, families, and friends. We also hope that further efforts on international exchange and cross-cultural understanding will be made in Iwate Prefecture in the future.



▲Group discussion with local youths

Representative Report by Yamell Lissania Peña Feliz, Delegation of the Dominican Republic

Hello, everyone. I'm Yamell Peña, leading the Dominican Republic delegation for the Index program 2023. First, I would like to express our sincere thanks, both from the Dominican delegation and our friends from Peru, for the incredibly warm welcome and hospitality we received during the regional program in Iwate.

Our journey kicked off with a visit to the renowned Sakurayama Shrine and its beautiful surroundings on the first day, allowing us to immerse ourselves in the rich cultural heritage of Iwate. The evening brought a delightful welcome reception with cultural presentations, where we danced together and were deeply moved by the extraordinary local talent.

Moving on to the second day, we attended a lecture on disaster prevention at Rikuzentakata Community Hall. This provided us with valuable insights into the activities of disaster prevention experts and deepened our understanding of the

tragic tsunami event of 2011. Our visit to the East Japan Earthquake Iwate Tsunami Memorial Hall Museum and Michi-no-Eki Takatamatsubara followed, further enriching our experience.

On the third day, at the Tono Fire Station, we received a comprehensive explanation of the logistical support provided to the disaster-stricken areas. This was complemented by a visit to the Tono City Logistics Support Museum, where we engaged in a unique hands-on experience of making Rice Ball "Onigiri" and soup with the local community.

Additionally, our time at the Civic Center allowed us to step into the enchanting world of the Tono Children's Book Forest, where we had the pleasure of engaging in meaningful discussions with the local youth.

In conclusion, these experiences provided a platform for exchanging ideas and visions. The regional program in Iwate has been a journey

filled with discovery, enlightenment, and heartfelt connections. Our visit to this prefecture will hold a special place in our hearts.



▲Group photo with local youths after the program in Tono City

Representative Report by Harumi Karina Kasay Ganoza, Delegation of the Republic of Peru

From the road to Iwate, the Peruvian delegation was anxious to get to know this prefecture, but when we arrived the reality exceeded our expectations for its people, city and history of resilience.

The catastrophe of March 2011 left a great mark on its inhabitants, but above all it allowed its people to create an identity as a community, finding the way to obtain solutions and prevent more disastrous cases than that of 2011. The city of Tono allows us to realize the importance of alliances, the logistical support of associations is a fundamental pillar to solve the emergency situation and take care of each other. It is surprising how a city can take the role and want to take charge of protection if a catastrophe occurs. A good lesson for my country.

Also, mentioning the experience of making onigiri, I didn't think it would be so valuable to know how people in Iwate seek to get what they need so that their people don't go hungry. To observe that they can have a meal ready to eat in less than 5 minutes shows the level of commitment the country has to its people.

Visiting the memorial museum in Rikuzentakata made the 2011 situation more real and allowed us to realize how close we are to a similar event; climate change is a latent problem and controlling it a constant challenge. When I read the testimonies of the victims, I felt their sorrow, but I also captured their desire to get up and rebuild their space, their home. I was honored to give the flowers in their memory, a special moment of connection with their people and their

feelings. I had not been in such a beautiful and meaningful place before.

The working groups we had with the young people from Iwate were valuable to identify how disaster management is approached in a leading country like Japan, and to share the experience of the Dominican Republic and Peru with their own particularities. On behalf of the Peruvian delegation, we are grateful to Japan for the great work they are doing and for the impact it has and will have in our communities. It is gratifying to know that they maintain a sense of community and mutual support in times of emergency.

Additionally, we had a warm evening at the cultural exchange. We were able to meet a new Japanese dance, who with their drums, enthusiasm and smiles gladdened our hearts. It was very gratifying to see the effort they put into their dance, which translated into many smiles and applause; we were able to dance together and share with their people.

In conclusion, Iwate left us with a great lesson: to move forward despite adversity. It was truly unimaginable for Peruvians that in such a short time Ofunato was able to get back on its feet so quickly and build better options to safeguard its home. Peru is no stranger to earthquakes, and we hope that thanks to international cooperation, better disaster management policies will be built.

Our delegation leaves with a happy heart and with the determination to apply what we have learned from our areas of study and work, convinced that prevention and teamwork are part of the perfect equation to focus on solutions and challenge the effects of climate change and deal natural disasters.



▲ Giving flowers in memory of victims at the East Japan Earthquake Tsunami Memorial Hall in Rikuzentakata

Chapter 5 Evaluation

1. Survey method

Questionnaire was administered online using Microsoft Forms, in both multiple choice and descriptive formats.

2. Response rate

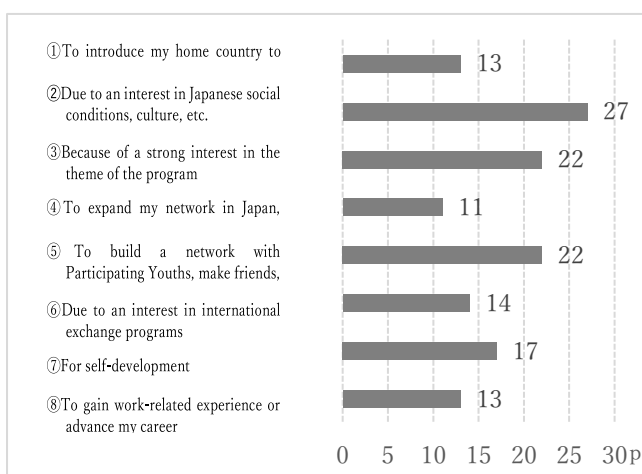
32 Overseas Participating Youths responded (100%)

3. Overall evaluation

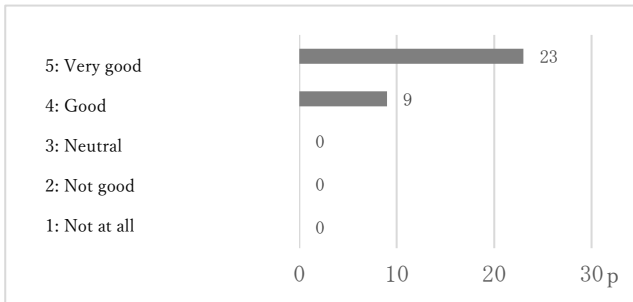
A questionnaire survey was conducted on the Overseas Participating Youths who participated in the program, using a 5-point scale and free description. The results are as follows.

3-1. Overall program

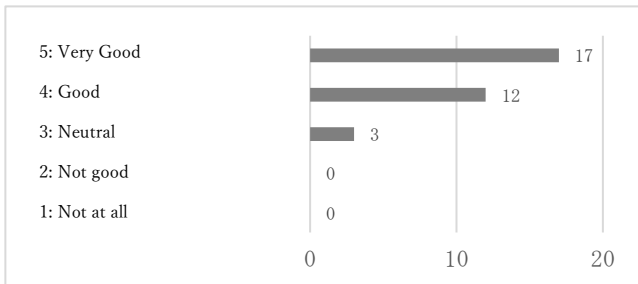
(1) What was your primary reason for participating in this program? (Multiple answers allowed)



(2) Were you able to achieve your objectives?

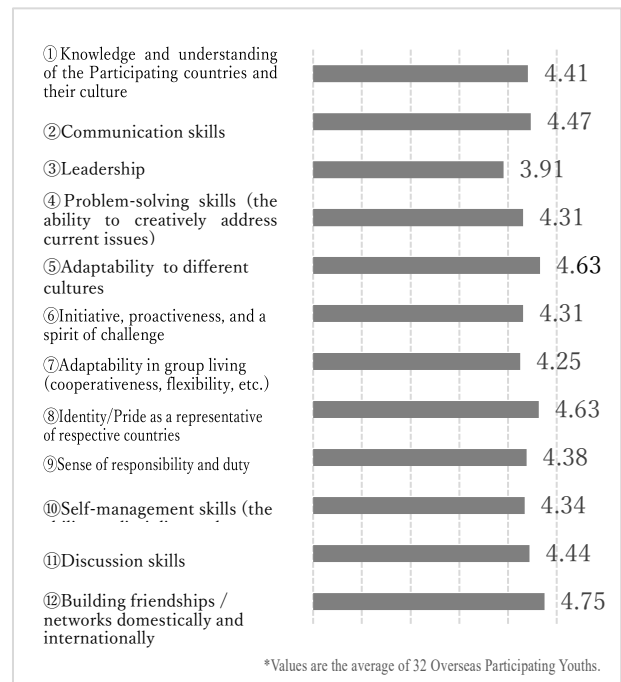


(3) Do you think the overall program was good?

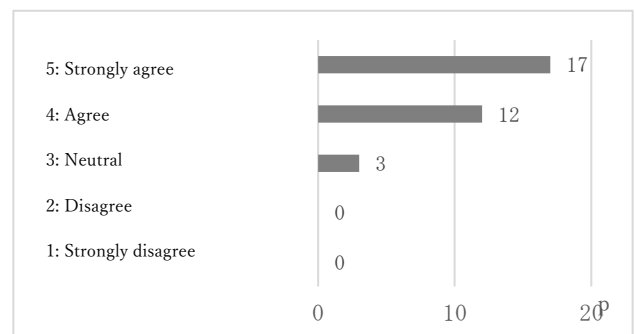


(4) Please choose the options below, ranging from 5 to 1, which you believe are most appropriate for each of the items listed from ① to ⑫ regarding the knowledge, experience, and personal growth you gained throughout the program as a whole.

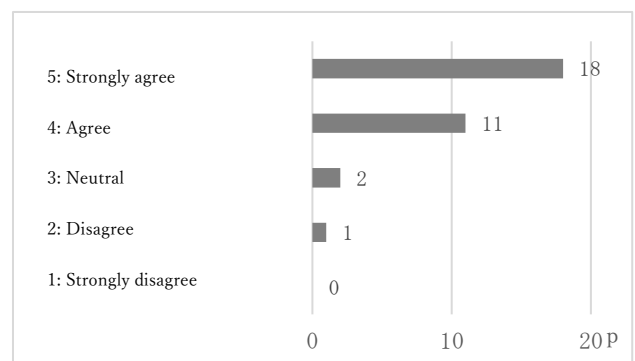
- 5: Significant effective
- 4: Effective
- 3: Neutral
- 2: Not effective
- 1: No at all



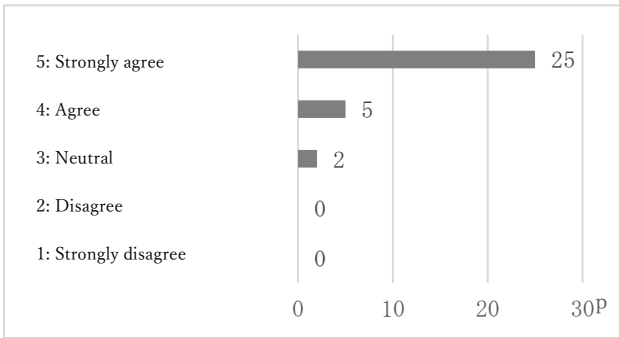
(5) Do you believe that your perspectives on life, society, etc., have changed as a result of your participation in the program?



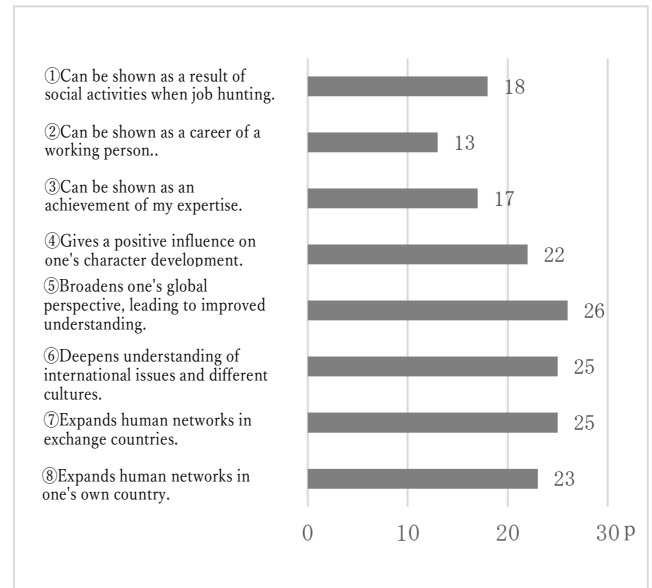
(6) Has your participation in the program led you to develop a desire to start or participate in social contribution activities?



(7) Do you think that this program will be beneficial for your future?



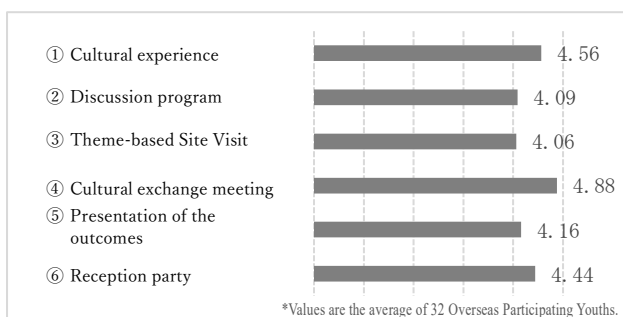
(8) For those who selected 5 and 4 in the above question, please choose from the following options which ones you think will be beneficial, and you can choose multiple options as they apply.



3-2. International Youth Conference (Oct 16 to 19)

(1) How would you rate the International Youth Conference? Please select which of the following items 5 to 1 you think is applicable.

- 5: Very good
- 4: Good
- 3: Neutral
- 2: Not good
- 1: Not at all



(2) Please feel free to write down what you liked about the International Youth Conference and what needs to be improved. (Free Description)

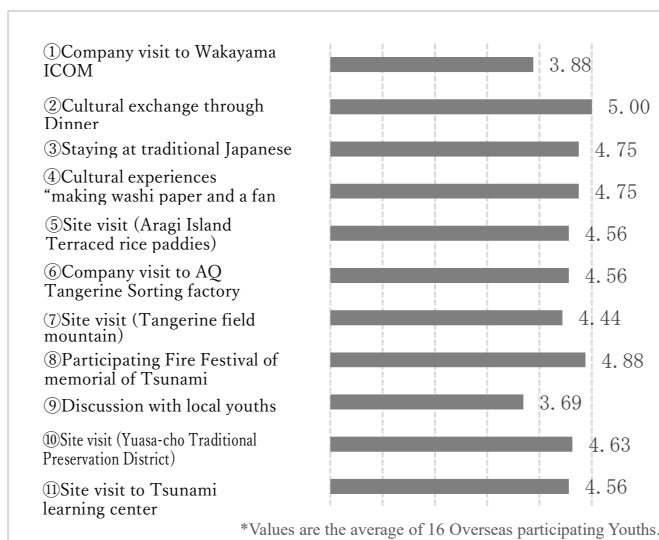
- I wish I had more time flexibility.
- There were many interesting and important activities and we were able to share time with participants from different countries and learn much about different topics in the main themes.
- Overall, it was great, but I felt the program was very packed, especially as I felt jet lag and travel fatigue.
- They spent too much time creating business models and were too caught up in the framework. This seems to have limited discussions about our different IT cultures and what we can do better in each other's countries.
- I would have appreciated the opportunity to get out of the hotel more often.
- I wanted more opportunities to learn about each other's culture through discussion. Instead of having to focus on writing and presenting a business plan, it would have been nice to have time to learn about each other's cultures.

3-3. Regional Program (October 20 to 23)

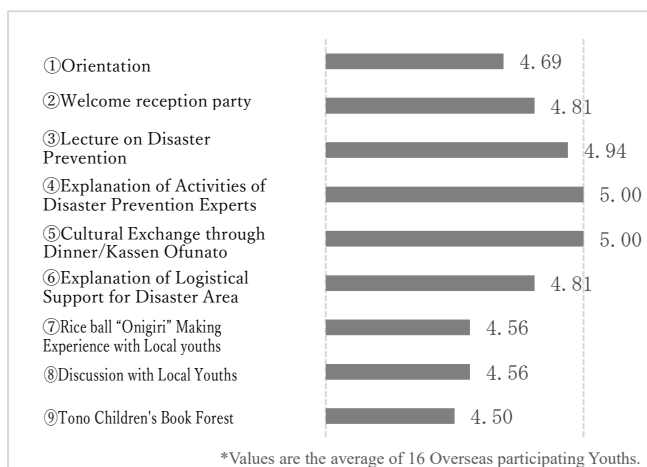
(1) How would you rate the Regional Program?
Please select which of the following items 5 to 1 you think is applicable.

- 5: Very good
- 4: Good
- 3: Neutral
- 2: Not good
- 1: Not at all

<Wakayama Program>



<Iwate Program>



(2) Please provide your thoughts freely regarding what went well in the Regional Program and any areas that could be improved.

<Wakayama Program/Estonian Youths>

- Overall, the regional program felt very enjoyable, welcoming and well cared for. I liked everything, but I felt that the company inspection, etc., would have been better if it had been conducted in a smaller group or if there were tour leaflets.
- I felt that we could have gotten closer if we had had a longer introductory session with local youths in Wakayama Prefecture. Through the program, we were able to really enjoy the people, nature, cultural dinners, traditional Japanese houses, making Japanese paper and Uchiwa fans, a tangerine sorting factory, a fire festival, the old town of Yuasa, and the Tsunami Museum.

<Wakayama Program/Danish Youths>

- The program was really well planned.
- The company visit was a little too short, and there was not much time for discussion with young people.
- There was not enough time to actually exchange opinions and discuss things.
- The welcome party and cultural experience were wonderful and very memorable. Thank you for this wonderful experience.
- It was a pity that I didn't have time to get closer to the local youths. It was a little difficult because of the language barrier and their English skills were not good enough. If we knew each other a little better, the discussion would have been more fun and deeper.

<Iwate Program/Dominican Youths>

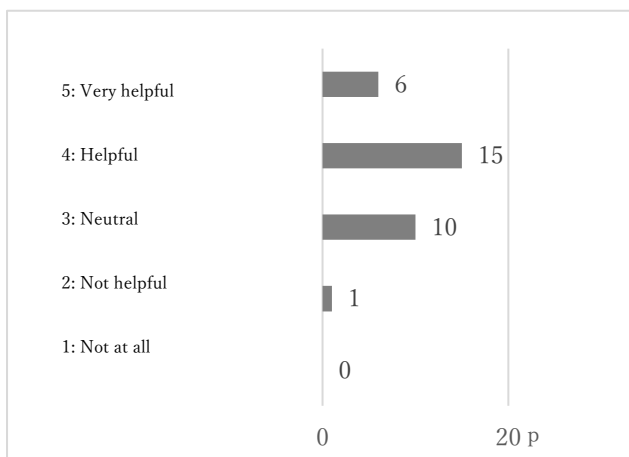
- The lecture on disaster had a great influence on me. I learned directly what happened to them and how they saved people and rebuilt the city.
- The breathtaking beauty of the local scenery and the heartfelt hospitality of the people made it a memorable experience.

<Iwate Program/Peruvian Youths>

- I learned directly what happened in Rikuzentakata City and how they saved people and rebuilt the city.
- The activities of the regional program were very enjoyable. We were able to learn more about the disasters experienced by Tono City and how these towns were rebuilt.
- I didn't have enough time and felt it would have been better if I could stay in Iwate a little longer and share my experiences with more local youths.

3-4. Online Exchange

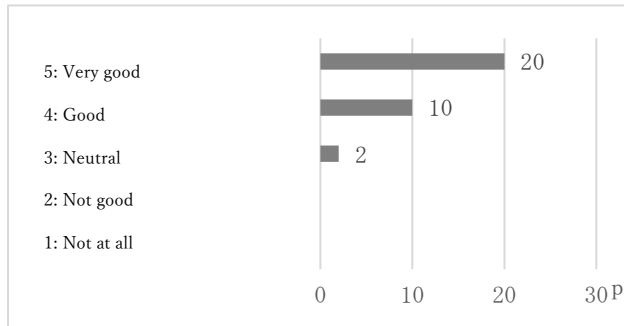
Did the online exchange (September 2 for Dominican Republic and the Republic of Peru, September 3 for Estonian Republic and the Kingdom of Denmark) help you prepare for the dispatch program and the International Youth Conference?



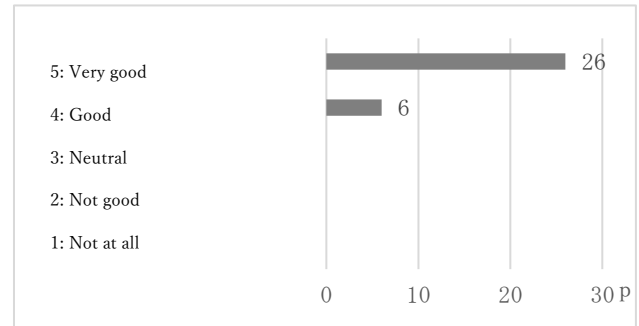
3-5. Tokyo Program (October 24 to 25)

How would you rate the Tokyo Program?

<Farewell Party>



<Inspection in Tokyo>



4. Overall Assessment

First, it is worth noting "1. Overall evaluation, the result of (4) The effects on your own growth, etc. obtained through this project as a whole." In response to the 12 items of the survey, more than 80% of the Overseas Participating Youths answered "5 = Significant effect" or "4 = Some effect" in 11 items. The majority of the Overseas Participating Youths felt that their communication skills, ability to respond to different cultures, and discussion skills had improved. This shows that the aim of this project, to cultivate the spirit of international cooperation and improve the practical ability of international cooperation, was achieved also for the Overseas Participating Youths. Furthermore, many of the Overseas Participating Youths selected the item "To build connections and become friends with people in exchange countries" as the purpose of participation in this project, and, to the question of effect of participation, the highest value of 4.75 was recorded to the answer: "Creating a network of friends in Japan and abroad." Thus, it is fair to conclude that their purposes were fulfilled.

Moreover, to the questions 1-(5) "Do you think that the way you think about life and society has changed through your participation in this project?," 1-(6) "Have you become motivated to start and participate in social contribution activities through your participation in the project?," and 1-(7) "Do you think that this project will help your future?" more than 90% of the participants answered "5 = Yes, absolutely" or "4 = Yes, to a certain extent."

On the other hand, about the International Youth Conference, there were comments such as "it would have been preferable to focus more on the discussion of learning about each other's cultures" and "Spent too much time creating business models and were too caught up in the framework." These are the aspects that need improvement.

The regional program is worth referring to. Many commenters praised the content of the program and the experience of Japanese culture, saying, "The heartfelt hospitality of the people made it a memorable experience," and "The activities of the regional program were very enjoyable." Furthermore, many people commented that "Disaster and IT

learning and knowledge of local attractions were valuable" and it can be said that the local program was very beneficial for the young people who participated.

On the other hand, some pointed out that there was a lack of time and opportunities for exchange of ideas and interaction with local youth, and others commented that language barriers and limitations on the English ability of the other side prevented the discussion from deepening, which are lessons for the next time.

From the results of the above evaluation, it can be seen that the Overseas Participating Youths returned home with a very good impression of the Project and

the country of Japan. Furthermore, through discussions with the Japanese participants, they were able to improve many skills, including communication skills, ability to deal with different cultures, discussion skills, and others. Therefore, it can be evaluated that the objectives of the Project have been sufficiently achieved and the project has achieved expected results.

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