

# 8th SWYAA Global Assembly in Turkey

August 30 – September 3, 2014 (Official Program)

September 3 – 7, 2014 (Optional Tour)



## 8th SWYAA Global Assembly

### Purpose of the SWYAA Global Assembly

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- a) To provide an opportunity for the former participating youth of the SWY program (hereafter ex-PYs) from various countries and different participating years to meet, and by sharing thoughts, strengthen their international alumni network,
- b) To provide opportunities for the ex-PYs to learn about the culture and people of the visiting country,
- c) To provide opportunities to the ex-PYs to be engaged in volunteer activities so that they can contribute to the society,
- d) To share information about post-program activities that are taking place around the world, and
- e) To revitalize SWYAA by hosting or participating in the Global Assembly.

### Outline

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- Title of the event: The 8th SWYAA Global Assembly – 19th International Reunion
- Dates: Official Program: August 30 to September 3, 2014  
Optional Tour: September 3 to September 7, 2014
- Hosting organizations: International Youth Exchange Organization of Japan (IYEO)  
SWYAA Turkey
- Main event: Conference for Post-Program Activities
- Participation fee: Official Program: 1,650 Turkish Lira (Early registration: 1,300 Turkish Lira)  
Optional Tour: 750 Turkish Lira (Early registration: 650 Turkish Lira)
- Participants: 153 participants from 26 countries

The 8th Global Assembly (GA) of the Ship for World Youth Alumni Association (SWYAA) was held from August 30 to September 3, 2014. From September 3 to September 7, an optional tour to experience Turkey culture in Cappadocia was held.

In organizing for the GA, SWYAA Turkey prepared the detailed schedule including the selection and coordination of the places to be visited in various activities.

## Activity Schedule

Date	Time	Activity
Official Program		
Sat.,Aug 30	All day	Arrival of the participants
Sun.,Aug 31	7:00 - 8:30	<Breakfast>
	9:30 - 11:00	Orientation
	11:30 - 13:30	Lunch with Mayor of Fatih and walk around the city walls in Fatih Municipality
	14:00 - 17:30	Visit Sultanahmet district (Museum and Mosque etc. )
	20:00 - 23:30	Opening ceremony and welcome reception
Mon.,Sep 1	7:00 - 8:00	<Breakfast>
	9:30 - 18:00	Visit Prince Islands - Halki Island (the Halki Theological School) - Buyukada Island (horse carts, bicycle ride, swimming)
	19:00 - 21:00	<Dinner>
Tue.,Sep 2	7:00 - 8:15	<Breakfast>
	9:30 - 12:00	Conference for Post-Program Activities
	13:00 - 14:00	<Lunch>
	14:00 - 15:00	Visit Panorama 1453 History Museum
	15:30 - 17:30	Visit Miniaturk
	20:00 - 23:00	Farewell party
Wed.,Sep 3	7:00 - 8:00	<Breakfast>
	10:00 - 14:00	Institutional visit (Ageing society, Persons with disability, Environment, Media, Volunteerism and Cross Cultural Understanding, Arts and Turkish culture, Education)
	14:00 - 22:00	Free time
Optional Tour		
Wed.,Sep 3	23:00	Travel to Cappadocia for optional tour
Thu.,Sep 4	8:30	<Breakfast> (bus)
	10:00 - 13:30	Visit big strangely shaped rocks, and free time at the hotel
	13:45 - 14:30	<Lunch>
	14:30 - 17:00	Visit Goreme Open-Air Museum and Pottery studio
	19:00	<Dinner>
Fri.,Sep 5	5:00	Baloon Tour (optional tour)
	7:00 - 8:30	<Breakfast>
	9:30 - 12:30	Visit Devrent Valley and Zelve Open-Air Museum
	13:00 - 13:45	<Lunch>
	13:45 - 18:30	Visit Pigeon Valley, Urgup, Carpet mill, Pashaba and Winery
	19:00	<Dinner>
	21:00 - 23:00	Turkish Night
Sat.,Sep 6	6:00	Baloon Tour (optional tour)
	7:00 - 8:30	<Breakfast>
	9:30 - 12:00	Visit Mustafapasa
	12:30 - 13:15	<Lunch>
	13:30 - 19:00	Visit Kaymakli Underground City
	19:30	<Dinner>
Sun.,Sep 7	8:00	Leave for home

## **Sunday, August 31 Official Program**

More than 150 participants from all around the world came together for the first day of the 8th SWYAA Global Assembly (GA). At the orientation in a hotel, the participants were delighted to see some old friends and excited to start new friendships.

After the orientation, the participants had lunch at a restaurant near the ancient castle wall in Fatih Municipality, and had a talk by the Mayor Mr. Mustafa Demir about the history of Istanbul. The participants further deepened their understanding of this historic city from a talk by a member of the organizing committee which explained mainly about the origin of the name “Topkapı” and the history of the castle wall.

In the afternoon, the participants visited the Yerebatan Cistern in the Sultanahmet Square. The participants very eagerly asked questions to tour guides and learned a lot about the source of the cistern water, how the water used to be delivered to people, and more. The visit was followed by a free time and the participants visited nearby places of their choice such as the Blue Mosque, the Topkapı Palace and the Ayasofya Archeological Museum. Some participants visited Ayasofya and admired the fusion of Catholic and Islamic architectures. They also listened intently to the stories of other historic constructions such as Blue Mosque which was built as if to counter Ayasofya, or other constructions which showed the contacts with outside world such as Egypt.

The welcome reception was organized in the evening on a Bosphorus Cruise. The participants enjoyed music and dance surrounded by beautiful night views. And with unique traditional costumes from different countries all around the venue, everyone felt as if they were back on their own ship program, enjoyed the melancholic and quality time.



## **Monday, September 1 Official Program**

The participants visited the Prince Islands on a

chartered ship from Istanbul. First stop was at the Halki Theological School on Heybeliada Island. The island, away from the hustle and bustle of Istanbul, prohibits the use of cars except for public vehicles such as ambulances and fire engines, and the people move around mainly on foot, on bicycles or on horse carts. The participants could feel the environmental commitment of the island. The Halki Theological School was a Greek Orthodox theological school built in the 11th century, or during the Byzantine Era. In the complex, preserved sites included a chapel with beautiful gold leaf religious paintings and class rooms for studying Christian theology. The school was not operating any more but it was impressive to find a historic Christian institution preserved in Turkey where 99 % of the people are Muslim.

The participants moved to Buyukada Island in the afternoon, separated into two groups, and enjoyed the time as one liked; one group walking around the island and the other bathing at a beach.

The group move between the islands on a ferry, and the participants enjoyed singing together and talking to each other on the deck, which reminded them of the time spent at the Sports Deck on the ship during the Ship for World Youth (SWY) programs.

## **Tuesday, September 2 Official Program Conference for Post-Program Activities**

### **1. Reports on the international youths exchange programs of the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan, and on the SWYAA International Speakers: Saeko Obu (Principal Deputy Director for International Youth Exchange, Cabinet Office), Tamae Saito (Secretary-General, SWYAA International)**

First, Ms. Saeko Obu explained on the current situation of and the modifications to the SWY program. She also reported on the Global Leaders Development Program (GLDP) which was conducted as the successor of the SWY program in the fiscal year 2013. She reported on the survey of the former participating youths (hereinafter, ex-PYs) of the program and thanked the audience for their collaboration. The results of the survey would be available on the Cabinet Office’s website in 2015, she added.

In continuation, Ms. Tamae Saito announced that a new SWYAA charter came into effect on January 2014, and reported on the conference held in June 2014 among the representatives of the SWYAA member countries and the respective governments. At the conference, participants presented various proposals for the continuation of the

SWY program and for its improvements. The conference also discussed how the SWYAA International could contribute to the SWY program, how the membership fee (100 US\$) would be used, proposals for setting working groups, and about the next Voting Session for International Representatives. She introduced the Homestay+1, as an example of common activities the SWYAA International was carrying out.

## **2. SWYNZAA Reunion – Stoking the Fire 2014**

### **Tireni Ratema (SWY25)**

In the SWYNZAA reunion this year, she participated in the “Making organic pizza oven” event which was organized as part of the reconstruction project of Hannahs Bay outside of Rotorua on the New Zealand’s northern island. The participants enjoyed baking pizza in that hand-made oven which was made totally out of soil and other natural materials. These kinds of activities are effective in connecting the leaders and bringing ideas into real actions.

## **3. IYEO Activities**

### **Masaharu Koge (IYEO Vice President/SWY3)**

Mr. Koge briefed about the International Youth Exchange Organization of Japan (IYEO), the change of its president and about its objectives for the fiscal year 2014 among others. He then introduced some of the main activities of IYEO such as Sri Lanka Educational Support Project “One More also Child Goes To School” and IYEO Challenge Fund. He also reported on the contributions that IYEO provides to the Center for International Youth Exchange (CENTERYE) for its International Understanding Educational Support projects.

## **4. Selection of the participating youths**

### **Jose Sano Takahashi (SWY11/16)**

SWYAA Peru has been involved in the selection process of the participants since the SWY16. He explained about the selection methods at different selection stages for this year’s Global Youth Leaders Development Program – The Ship for World Youth Leaders. The process includes advertisements, orientations, online registrations, submission of documents, panel interviews, leadership camp, and the final interviews. The SWYAA Peru adopts this quite strict selection process to help improve the program and to ensure the better post-program activities and social contributions.

## **5. SWYAA Oman Activities**

### **Sami Al Breiki (SWY23)**

SWYAA Oman is quite active. It participates in the Clubs Youth Camp and organizes various activities such as group meals among ex-PYs of different SWY batches. It keeps close relationship with Japan by attending different events such as dinner with the Japanese Ambassador or the birth day ceremony for the Emperor. It also contributes to the society by activities such as donating blood on the SWYAA Oman Day every year. Its active use of IT includes compiling database, communicating on various SNS, and opening a SWY Family page on Facebook. The newly adopted SWYAA Oman logo was also presented.

## **6. SWYAA India Activities**

### **Pynbeit Bha Passah (SWY2)**

SWYAA India organizes the Open School in collaboration with the Japanese embassy and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), as part of their contribution in education for the children from poor families. It also organizes programs related to health care and water management, technical trainings such as computer skills, sewing and photography for disadvantaged children, Japanese language classes, origami paper folding crafts contests, and the Youth Leadership Program. It provides opportunities for Japanese university students to teach Japanese or Japanese culture, and conduct some exchange programs in collaboration with Japanese universities. In addition, it’s enhancing cooperation with different Japanese institutions such as the Japanese embassy and the Japan Foundation to establish friendly relationship between India and Japan.

## **7. SWYAA Egypt Activities**

The presenter used a video and explained about the history of SWYAA Egypt, the exchanges and cooperations with the Japanese embassy, and about the assistance the SWYAA provides for the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

## **8. SWYAA Sweden Activities**

### **Carolina Hawranek (SWY23)**

SWYAA Sweden contributes through financial supports for SWY related projects such as IYEO Sri Lanka Educational Support Project “One More Child Goes To School” and “Tupendane International.” It also invests in the SWY KIVA micro finance scheme. Financial support is a way for utilizing the SWYAA’s limited resources effectively. It also puts efforts in exchanging with the

Japanese embassy, and its members have been invited to the official residence of the Japanese Ambassador.

## 9. RUSWY Train

### Elizaveta Mokhova (SWY24)

SWYAA Russia organized RUSWY Train from 22nd of June to 6th of July 2014. The program involved approx. 5,000km Siberian Express train ride visiting Moscow, Kazan, Ekaterinburg and Novosibirsk. 12 ex-PYs joined the program and some of them visited Irkutsk as an optional tour. The time from its advertisement to the deadline for registration was quite short but the SWYAA Russia is considering doing the program again in the future if allowed the opportunities.



## 10. SWYAA Greece Activities

### Konstantinos Tsigkaras (SWY18)

Mainly three projects were presented as the post-program activities of the SWYAA Greece. The first one was the participation, with the cooperation from the Ministry of Environment, in the Environmental Awareness Campaign on the “World Environment Day” on the 5th of June. The second example was the participation in the SWYAA’s common project of Homestay+1. The third one was the planning and implementation of sports events, as a social activity, for support groups for children with disabilities in which some of the SWYAA members were involved.

## 11. SWY KIVA

### Bonny Turner (SWY12),

### Joshua Hoare (SWY22)

SWY Australia started an online microfinance project called KIVA in 2011. Through this project the SWYAA has been providing finance to many people who are in need for economic reasons. Persons in any SWY participating countries are eligible for this project and currently the SWY Australia is taking initiative of the project in coordination with other members of the SWYAA in different countries.

## 12. SWY2 Reunion

### Volunteer participants of the reunion

The SWY2 ex-PYs gathered for their 25th anniversary in conjunction with this SWYAA GA in Turkey. All the volunteer participants of the reunion came on to the stage and showed their smiles and cheerful spirit while presenting about the reunion. They talked about how the program was for SWY2 back in 1990, showed the audience some photos of the participants then and now, other photos of their children and grandchildren while telling the audience that the SWY family was expanding and that the friendship was as firm as it was 25 years ago.



## 13-1. SWYAA Bahrain Activities

### Zahwa Al Heddi (SWY20)

She presented the five areas of the post-program activities by SWYAA Bahrain. First area was the contribution to local communities such as exchanges with orphans, visits to nursing homes, exchanges with people with disabilities including teaching origami paper folding crafts, clothing donations, and visits to children in hospitals. The second area was self-development activities such as practicing first aid and taking Japanese classes. The third one was Our World One World Project which was a collaborative project conducted with the SWYAA Costa Rica and SWYAA Greece. The fourth area was about the exchanges between the SWYAA and Japanese community in Bahrain such as participating in official Japanese events and having cultural exchanges. The fifth was about the SWYAA GA held in Bahrain in 2012.

## 13-2. Proposal of a social application software for SWY community

### Osama Al Balushi (SWY25, Bahrain)

He proposed a social application software for ex-PYs and future participants of the SWY program. The application aims at deepening exchanges between the participants, sharing ideas and projects, and solving issues



together. It will also be used for posting the program related news such as the itinerary of GA, and for searching the information on participants' profiles. He would proceed with the project with other members who support this idea.

### **13-3. Individual Activities – KEYS – Yaqoob Alnajem (SWY24, Bahrain)**

He presented a leadership program called KEYS which he was doing as part of his post-program activities. Experiences during the SWY program have been duly reflected in this project.

### **14. SWYAA Spain Activities SWYAA Spain members**

SWYAA Spain sold products hand made by Tohoku victims in collaboration with a project carried out by Japanese ex-PYs which aims at helping the reconstruction after the Great East Japan Earthquake (“Minami Sanriku Treasure Box” project initiated by Mr. Yuichiro Takahashi from SWY13.) Other activities such as supports for the victims of the Viet Nam war etc. were also reported. The SWYAA Spain opened a new Facebook page.



### **15. Individual Activities – Lost Lyrics – Seon Mi Jang (Sun) (SWY24, Canada)**

She, an artist herself, does an alternative education project for young people from low-income communities to help them express themselves through art and music in order for these youths to have more active wills and higher skills. On the SWY program the presenter met Ramon Narayan (SWY16/24, New Zealand) who also worked for education for youth. They were scheduled to present their first collaborative performance with the help from EASWY at the Japanese embassy in Egypt after the GA. The presenter performed on the stage for the audience.

Q&A session followed the presentation on the activities from member countries and individuals, before the conclusion of the Conference for Post-Program Activities.

The conference observed a unique characteristic of the SWY program through some examples of collaborations between different member countries besides activities by each country.

The participants took a bus after the Conference for Post-Program Activities and had lunch onboard before visiting Panorama 1453 History Museum. At the museum, as its name suggests, the visitors can feel the historic incidence of the conquest of Constantinople in 1453 by Sultan Mehmed II and the Ottoman Turks through panoramic paintings. All the written explanations in the museum were in Turkish but the visitors can rent audio guide players and have very good explanations in English or Japanese. The visual exhibitions on the attacks by the Ottoman Turks against Constantinople were very interesting even without explanations. On the top floor, the visitors could really feel through the 360 degrees panorama the fierce battle field of the moment when Constantinople finally fell to the hands of Ottoman Turks under Sultan Mehmed II. The visit was very helpful for the participants to learn about the history of Turkey.

The participants then visited Miniaturk, one of the biggest theme parks in the world for miniature land marks. The vast park exhibits miniatures of touristic sites and historic constructions in Turkey such as Ayasophya, Cappadocia, and Pamukkale. Visitors can have audio guides by placing the entrance tickets over a reader in front of each exhibit. The participants deepened their knowledge by the guides. The participants enjoyed walking around the park, listening to the audio guides and taking pictures in front of the exhibits. While the Miniaturk itself was interesting, the scenery around it was very beautiful and relaxing.

After the visit to Miniaturk, the participants went back to the hotel and then took a bus to Bahcesehir University, where the farewell party was organized. The university faced the Bosphorus strait and the party was held in a venue with terrace and beautiful night view of the strait. The party started with opening remarks, presentations of commemorative gifts and the announcement on the host country for the next SWYAA GA, Fiji. The participants enjoyed chatting with their old and new friends while savoring delicious food. In the middle of the party, the people sang together the SWY song composed on the SWY24 and enjoyed the performance of Soran dance. Many people enjoyed dancing in the center of the room toward the end of the party. It was a very typical SWY evening with a lot of smiles.

## Wednesday, September 3 Official Program

The final day of the official program was for institutional visits. Participants chose one institution from 7 different themes.

### Institutional visit 1: Aging society

The group visited Darulaceze Almshouse and had explanations from its psychoanalyst, Mr. Serkan Erebak, an ex-participant from SWY22.

The institution hosts 508 male and 448 female residents. The living area was divided into male and female sections and a mosque and a church in the vast premises. It has plenty of other facilities such as for sports and recreations. The home is free of charge and is available for males 65 years or older, females 60 years or older who can't live by themselves. Persons who have adult children with sufficient financial means are not eligible for residents.

The participants enjoyed the time with the residents chatting, doing some exercises with balls, and making origami paper folding crafts. They sang with a guitar and danced for the residents as well.

(Report by Natsue Mori, SWY22)



### Institutional visit 2: Persons with disability

The group visited Down Café an institution that supported youths with Down's syndrome. Inside of the café was very colorful and had cheerful atmosphere. Mr. Saruhan Singen, the founder of the café and the secretary general of IZEV an education fund for mentally challenged persons, explained about the institution using some visual aids. The Down Café was established in 2001 and was aimed at helping the members to be self-supportive by giving opportunities for social interactions and by helping them to cultivate self-confidence. 27 youths with disabilities between 20 and 35 years old take turn in a team of 5 or so to work as waiters. A couple of volunteers are helping the operation all the time. The café exhibits a lot of paintings and their sales are used for donations. It has plans

of expanding the business by incorporating such activities like Pilates and languages classes. The café seemed to have vast possibilities to help the members with limited social interactions to have direct exchanges with local people.

The participants had lunch after enjoying pleasant exchanges with the youths with disabilities. The youths served meals with very professional look and it surely reflected the important role Down Café plays in supporting them. (Report by Naoko Yokotsuka, SWY17)

### Institutional visit 3: Environment

The group visited a medical waste treatment plant and a household waste treatment facility, both operated by the Istanbul Çevre Yonetimi San ve Tic A.S.(İSTAÇ.) Mr. Osman Akgül, who's in charge of the installations, explained about the works İSTAÇ does and about the waste treatment methods. İSTAÇ is the biggest waste treatment company in the EU. It obliges hospitals to use red colored bags for all the medical wastes. The wastes go through several thousand filters which remove toxic or dangerous materials. It was also learned that the medical wastes were managed very strictly in automated incineration process. Public waste bins in Turkey do not separate PET bottles or glasses. At the household waste treatment facility, however, these were separated either by machines or by hands. It was regulated that 3% of the kitchen waste to be used as compost in parks, for roadsides, or for other purposes. This regulation helps the efficient recycle/reuse of wastes. It was quite impressive to witness through the visits that they used technologies and systems that were more advanced than in Japan. (Report by Kenji Tsukada, SWY21)

### Institutional visit 4: Media

The group visited a TV station, KANAL TURK. Mr. Teonon Gurmen, Director of Research, explained about the programs the station makes and broadcasts. The station prioritizes in entertainment programs for families and TV dramas were most popular. One participant commented that Turkish TV dramas were popular in the Middle East such as in Yemen, and other participants learned from this comment about the popularity and the marketing of the Turkish TV programs.

When participants asked about the controls on media, Mr. Gurmen explained that a 9 member council had strong power over broadcasting companies and courts sometimes orders to drop some of the programs because of their contents. Participants could feel the difficulty freedom of press faced.

The group then visited a studio in the TV station. It



looked, in contrast to the Japanese ones, very stylish, cool, and shiny. The editing software they used, SONY VEGAS, was said to be popular in the Middle East, though it was not well known in Japan. It was surprising to know that this Japanese product was more popular overseas than in Japan. It was a very valuable institutional visit where the participants could see and learn very well about the typical Turkish TV station.

(Report by Mifuyu Shimizu, SSEAYP26)



### **Institutional visit 5: Volunteerism and Cross Cultural Understanding**

The group visited the Balat Or-Ahayim Hospital where a Jewish Turk volunteer group called Pink Angeles provided their services.

Firstly, Ms. Kolonba Kasuto explained about the Pink Angels and the background leading to the foundation of the hospital. The volunteer group provides wide range of mental supports such as sessions of singing and handicrafts to the hospital users so that they can have joys of life. She also explained about the relations that the Jewish Turks migrated from Spain had the society and the background of the foundation of the hospital. It was impressive to know the strength and the influence that minority Jewish community had in the society. Not only English and Turkish but other languages such as Hebrew and Spanish were also heard during the time participants enjoyed exchanging with about 10 hospital users. The Japanese participants sang a Japanese song “Furusato” or hometown. That invited other participants to sing songs from their countries. In return, the Pink Angels and the hospital users all together sang their community song. The happy faces of the hospital users will never be forgotten. (Report by Haruka Ohno, GLDP)

### **Institutional visit 6: Arts and Turkish culture**

The group visited the headquarters of the Culinary Arts Center (YESAM). YESAM conducts researches for recreating and confirming the tangible or intangible

traditional cuisine and the customs created by the Turks over the centuries in different regions of the world.

Firstly, Ms. Ozden, who’s in charge of programs, explained about the characteristics of Turkish cuisine which were revealed through the archiving and studies that YESAM conducts on the history, current situation, food culture, and the traditions of Turkey. The explanations included about the facts that the food cultures differed in regions, such as north, southeast, west and the central, about indispensable ingredients, and about the relations between history and food culture. There were kitchens and other facilities where professional cooks demonstrated their skills on the fourth floor of the building (ARMAGGAN) where YESAM was located. The participants watched the demonstration of candy making. Transmitting the techniques of candy making have been based on apprentice system. The professional sense and the techniques demonstrated were very artistic as the cooks kneaded the 80 degrees candy by hands. The name ARMAGGAN came from the Turkish word “armağan” which means gifts. The building reflected the meaning of the word and there were different products beautifully placed in each floor, such as traditional fine accessories of oya lace, tableware, and jams made from Turkish ingredients.

The participants learned that the Turkish food was very much influenced by the long history from the Ottoman Empire era and the local cultures. The participants also learned that the Turkish people not only felt proud about their food listed one of the Three Grand Cuisines of the world, but they also were trying to respectfully and exactly hand related information and background to the future generations such as food recipes, history of the food where traditions from different countries influenced to each other, social structures, ceremonies and events, beliefs, and cooking techniques. The visit was a very valuable experience and the participants were moved by the activities and projects they witnessed at the institution. (Report by Yumiko Tanabe, SWY12 and Saori Sugitani, SWY21)

### **Institutional visit 7: Education**

The group visited the Yildiz Technical University and had explanations from one of its professors. The buildings had very exclusive atmosphere for a university as the complex was originally used for a palace of an aristocratic family during the Ottoman Empire. It was one of the highest rank universities in Turkey and the questions made by the participants were mostly about the entrance procedures.

In Turkey, people do not submit entrance applications to

each university but their choices of universities are decided by the results of the national exam. Only top 1 % or so of the students in the national exam will be entitled for the Yildiz Technical University. It was surprising to know that the faculties and specializations were assigned automatically for the students' talents. It was very interesting to see the difference while students in Japan studies what they are interested in but in Turkey they study the area which they could utilize their talent best.

(Report by Sakura Nagano, GLDP)

The scheduled visit to the Military Museum in the afternoon was cancelled due to the institution's convenience, and the participants enjoyed free time in Istanbul.

### **Wednesday, September 3 Optional Tour**

The participants who took the optional tour gathered at the hotel after the free time in Istanbul, and departed to Cappadocia in a bus. While they had hard time saying goodbyes to the ones who didn't join the tour, they were very excited about the new destination. It was an overnight bus ride.

### **Thursday, September 4 Optional Tour**

After their onboard breakfast, the group arrived in Cappadocia at 10 o'clock. The view was totally in the color of earth all around. The word Cappadocia means "the land of beautiful horses" in Persian. The Goreme National Park, in the center of the area, and its surrounding are registered as a World Heritage site.

The participants visited huge rocks with strange shapes which were formed by erosions over a long time. The rocks had holes like door here and there as the place was used as a castle in the old times. The participants were speechless at witnessing the natural grandeur formed by the erosions over thousands of years. The schedule was reorganized at the last moment in consideration of the participants' tiredness, and the group checked in to the Turban Hotel. The lunch was at the URANOS SARIKAYA, where the participants enjoyed luxurious time eating beef dishes with live traditional music played with string instruments called kanun. After lunch, the tour visited the group of churches spotted around in the caves at Goreme Open-air Museum. Wall paintings in the churches were very well preserved and colorful, and the participants eagerly took photos. The tour also visited pottery workshops in Avanos. The group watched a demonstration of making wine jugs, and one participant tried the potter's wheel after the demonstration. The participants spent joyful time. The colorful Turkish

potteries with varieties of shapes were especially popular among female participants.

The participants enjoyed talking to each other over dinner at the hotel about different topics such as memories from their SWY programs, souvenirs from Turkey, and the social issues from each country. With such abundant topics to talk, the conversations continued well into the midnight and there seemed to be never enough time.

### **Friday, September 5 Optional Tour**

Some of the participants gathered at 5 am and went for the ballooning tour. After breakfast at the hotel all the participants visited Dervrent Valley where people can observe rocks with the shape of camels before heading to the Zelve Open-air Museum. There were various churches spotted around in the caves with beautifully colored old wall paintings. The museum had a huge area and even the 90 minutes free time was not enough to go around.

In the afternoon, the tour visited a facility where traditional Turkish carpets were woven and sold, and the participants learned about the history and the process of carpet making. Well experienced women wove carpets in an incredible speed and with impressive beauty in their products. In Turkey, traditionally men made pottery and women made carpets. Man used to visit the parents of the woman he wanted to marry and made a pot in front of them, and the parents gave permission if the pot and the lid matched perfectly well. Women, when they reached marriageable age and felt ready for it, wove a carpet with designs that suggested their willingness and used it to tell their feeling to the parents.

The tour then visited Pasabag, where chimney shaped rocks occupied the scenery. The rocks were also called fairy chimneys as the legend says fairies lived in the rocks. There were also rocks used by monks who lived secluded lives here.

The tour visited a small winery in the early evening, and the participants enjoyed wines brewed with locally grown grapes. Though the climate was quite dry, there were grapes grown at roadside shops, and the people could feel the rich nature of the place. The evening was spent at a restaurant where participants enjoyed meals while enjoying traditional Turkish dances. The dancers taught the guests how to dance, and the participants danced together and enjoyed the wonderful Turkish evening.

### **Saturday, September 6 Optional Tour**

The second group for the ballooning tour left the hotel at around 6 am. The participants of the tour were

very excited, in the predawn darkness, waiting for the big balloons getting ready for the embarkation. The balloons took off after the safety briefings such as on the posture for landing. The balloons ascended quite fast at first and people felt a bit scared. The beautiful scenery, however, soon helped people to forget about that. From the balloons, the beautiful view of Cappadocia in sunrise was beyond descriptions and the people forgot about time.

After having breakfast, the tour visited a small village called Mustafapasa. The village used to be inhabited by Greeks and it preserved old buildings with its relaxing atmosphere. Even in the Greek resembling scenery, there were some buildings which were built out of caves, and people felt something strange when entering inside.

After the village, the tour visited Kaymakli Yeralti Sehri. It was a huge underground town that housed, surprisingly, more than 5,000 people who took refuge there from persecutions. The whole picture of the place has not been uncovered. It was quite hot for September with sunshine outside, but the underground felt cool and comfortable. The town had 8 floors underground with facilities for long term

living such as kitchens, pantries, wineries, and churches. The functionality of the place was amazing.

The Cappadocia tour came to its end, and the participants took overnight buses either to the airport or to Istanbul. They felt very hard to but said last goodbyes to old friends they talked a lot and deepened their bonds with and new friends they met during this occasion.

The bus arrived at the airport at around 7 am the next morning, and the tour was dissolved.



## Participation of the 8th SWYAA Global Assembly in Turkey

I participated in the 8th SWYAA Global Assembly (GA) in Turkey on behalf of Mr. Keiichi Sato, the president of IYEO. I myself am SWY3 ex-PY but have never participated in the GA. I had been very excited to be there.

As I talk to recent SWY ex-PYs, they often use the expression “SWY spirit.” The best part of participating in the GA this time was that I could feel and found what the SWY spirit meant. It had been difficult for me, who participated in the program 25 years ago, to describe what the SWY spirit was even though I could vaguely create its images.

When we arrived at the airport in Istanbul, members of SWYAA Turkey were waiting for us and took us, and other participants, to the meeting point. As we approached the meeting point, I could clearly recognize the different atmosphere the group radiated. It was not only that they were cheerful and lively but special energy seemed to be welling out from the group. Once we joined the group, people introduced to each other and talked endlessly; “Where are you from?,” “Which program were you in?,” “Do you know that person?,” “We had such experience during the program.” and so on and so forth.

I could see that some people participated in the GA multiple times and deepened their friendship with certain

IYEO Vice President, SWY3 Masaharu Koge friends every time they meet at the GA. I could witness, right after my arrival, the moments where people made bonds with each other regardless of the nationalities or the ages, using the SWY program as the common platform. I experienced the moments over and over during the program of the assembly, at the parties, and in the busses, every time when I met fellow participants.

For the GA, we had an opportunity of cruising on a ship in and around the Bosphorus strait dividing Asian and European sides of Istanbul. Just I could imagine from SWY ex-PYs, the people did not go inside but went straight to the deck. They sat on chairs or on the floor and started chatting to people around them, then some groups were formed. One of them at the front of the deck played guitar and sang Mexican songs, another at the back of the deck played Arabic drums and sang Arabic songs. Some joined singing songs, others kept on their chatting near these groups. Everybody enjoyed the time and space. I believe that it is part of the unique SWY culture where people are able to show their own culture while others are willing to accept the diversity, and everybody enjoys the shared time and space together.

I felt energy welling up inside me when I met people there. I felt the bonds between people over national

boundaries. I felt the nature of accepting and enjoying cultural diversity. I remembered that all these feelings were what I experienced during my SWY program. I found, thanks to the GA, that these feelings were shared among people of different ages. I believe these feelings shared beyond age gaps are the real SWY spirit, and very valuable assets of the SWY program.

This GA was a very big event with more than 150

participants, and most of the logistic operations were done by the SWYAA Turkey. It must have been a hard work for the group with limited number of members living in different parts of the country with their own busy daily job obligations. It was indeed a wonderful assembly. I truly give my appreciation to all the SWYAA Turkey committee members and all the participants who made the assembly a joyful success. Thank you all so much.

## **For Organizing a Future Global Assemble – Message from SWYAA Turkey**

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We would like to share our experience during the preparations and the realization of the program, and give some tips for those who are intended to host one of the future GAs.

**Application to be the host country:** Before deciding to apply to be the host country for the GA, it must be considered if the alumni will cooperate with the ministry responsible for the youth issues or another governmental organization. There are some advantages if one governmental body or municipality becomes one of the hosting parties. In some countries, it can be difficult to arrange institutional visits when there is no governmental partner. However, you must also consider that from time to time it may be a challenging to have a governmental partner in the organization. Official permissions or correspondences may take a long time, or people in charge may change frequently, which will cause you to stay behind in your preparations. They may interfere with many things such as the accommodation type, food and drinks to be served, places and institutions to be visited etc. You may need to have some extra courtesy calls. There is nothing wrong with going for a courtesy call. However, since these people are very busy, they may cancel your visit or decide to meet you at the very last minute and it may disturb your flow of the program.

In addition, you may need to invite extra people for the receptions when you have too many partners in the organization. In some cultures when you invite people you cannot ask for the reception fee. If you don't have a big budget or if the government won't pay for these guests, you may go into trouble with your financial balance. If you try to pay all the expenses with the participation fees, each extra guest will be a burden on your friends shoulder. Therefore, you must consider the pros and cons of having different partners in the organization.

When you decide to arrange the program on your own without getting any support from the government, you need

to reconsider your personal contacts. There may be high profile alumni members who you can turn to. You don't need to actively involve them in the organization, but they can arrange you a conference hall for the orientation or for the conference for post-program activities for free or a visit to an institution with just a phone call.

Another important issue to be considered is the number of active members who can take part both in the preparations and the organization. If you do not have crowded alumni, it may not be a big problem during the preparations. In fact, we recommend keeping the team making decision during the preparation small as it can be difficult to reach conclusions and get the final decision when there is a big decision making team. However, during the program you will need more people working hard and seriously. You may not handle the program and easily get tired if you don't have enough active members who can work during the program. In order to be able to do that try to be objective about the abilities, strengths and weaknesses of each member. This is so important while allocating different tasks to different people. You need to have members with different skills in your team. Attending previous GA gives an idea of what it is like. Therefore, members attended previous GAs must take part actively in the preparation. If you have never been to a GA before, we recommend you to attend one first before you apply to be the host country.

The personal relation between the members of the organizing committee is also important. Team members must know each other well. If they are aware of each other's abilities and have positive relations with each other, it will contribute to the success of the program.

The most crucial step is preparing the proposal. In order to be able to convince the selection committee, you need to explain clearly what would make your country a perfect host. You'd better have a few alternatives for the optional tour so that you can mention these places and put forward

the benefits to have a sound proposal. Hesitations in your proposal won't make it a successful one. Therefore, rather than giving a lot of alternative places discuss with in your alumni members and decide on a few best options and only provide information about them in your proposal.

As soon as you learn that you will be the host country, you need to start working. At first it may seem that there is a long time to go, but time passes so quickly that you realize it is getting too late to do things and you may need to hurry to finish the final preparations. Start in good time to be more effective in your work. Make your organization team and get together every now and then to move forward.

**Draft Program:** Considering the guidelines by IYEO and revising the programs of the previous GAs, try to prepare your draft program. We recommend that although it is a draft program do not change many things it as long as you don't need to. If you spent some time on planning your program before writing your draft program, you may not need to change many things later on. However, if your draft program is a quick product done inattentively, you may need to make frequent changes on it which will hinder you from proceeding further.

We don't recommend starting daily program very early in the morning. People miss each other and may want to talk and spend time together till late at night. Moreover, some others would like to explore the city and night or go clubbing. It will be difficult to start the day very early as they went to bed late the previous night. We try to include many activities in the program so we start the day early. However, if people cannot get up in the morning they will miss these activities anyway. Rather than preparing a very tight schedule, it is better to prepare a manageable one. If you may need to skip some activities at the last minute as people are late or stay behind the program, it is better to arrange a flexible one from the very beginning.

**Publicize:** After you are convinced that your program is ready to publicize, build up your website and prepare your other promotion materials. These materials will be very important for a variety of purposes such as attracting participants, finding sponsors, or convincing institution for institutional visits etc.

The website can be prepared by one of the alumni members, but it is not necessary. You can hire a professional to make it for you. In any case, there must be at least one person with perfect computer literacy among the alumni members. Even if you hire an outsider to prepare your website, it is important that somebody from the team can

update the information in the website frequently.

The websites of the previous GA can be a good guideline how to prepare yours. Check them out and prepare the menu bar. The most important part in the website is the "Frequently Asked Questions." You FAQ must be very detailed in order to reduce the number of e-mails with questions asking for further information. You can include information such as visa issues, weather conditions, currency etc. in that section. It is true that there will be many people who won't read that section carefully and ask about the information already provided in the website. However, there are many more people who read it carefully and can find an answer for their questions before writing to you. We recommend you to have a closed Facebook group and add only those who are officially registered people to that group. If you don't open it to others who are not registered, you can avoid unnecessary chat. You can use it for your announcement of important issues.

We recommend you to prepare two different promotion booklets: one for the program presentation which only includes information about the SWY program and SWYAA GA and the other one for the sponsors including information about sponsorship opportunities. In the program presentation booklet the focus must be on the program. If SWY program is not very well known in your country, you can give information about the program in this booklet. You can use it for your presentation to the contact person of the institutions to be visited. The booklet for the sponsors will include information about sponsorship opportunities and information to convince sponsors why they should support that event.

**Receiving applications and correspondence:** Application process for the GA must not be too complicated neither for you nor for the participants. Somebody who has the internet access all the time must take of the applications and correspondence with the participants. Participants will be asking lots of questions and they will expect immediate reply. If the same person will also be in the charge of both the registration and correspondence, it is really important that this person is available all the time and can reply back in a very short time. If there are more than one people replying back, there must be a good coordination between them to make sure that each participant asking a question gets a reply back.

**Accommodation:** It was a very long and difficult process for us to decide on where to host the participants. Before we actually started preparations, we were planning to book all

the rooms in a 3 or 4 star hotel to make the accommodation cost cheaper. However, we learned that we could only book so many rooms only through travel agencies in Turkey. It was not possible to book all the rooms in a hotel, either. In most of the hotels, the rooms were already sold to different travel agencies and for one travel agency it was not possible to make reservation for rooms more than a certain number depending on the number of rooms a hotel had. It was only possible to reserve as many rooms as we need in a congress hotel, all of which were 5 stars. In that case, the accommodation cost a bit more than we expected. We thought of reducing the cost booking triple rooms. However, the extra beds were not as comfortable as the other beds in the room. We didn't think that it would be fair to charge the same price for a less comfortable bed. In order to make sure that everybody gets the same services we decided to book double rooms only. However, for those who were looking for more comfort, we also had provided the opportunity of a single room with a little bit higher cost.

Each hotel has different booking system. They may not book all the rooms you needed next to each other or on the same floor. The participants may complain that their rooms are far from each other. The participants may also refused to stay with the person that you have matched them with.

The location was our number one concern while deciding on the GA hotel. It must have been in a safe area central to the other places to be visited during the program. It must have also been easily accessible with public transport. Actually, Taksim area was more central and there were more hotel options there. However, since there were frequent protests in this area, it was possible for the participants to come across a fight between the police and the demonstrators. Since we didn't think that it was a very safe area, we didn't consider any hotel in that area although it had many other advantages.

We visited many hotels to come up with the best alternative. It is important that you need pay a visit even if you arrange the hotel through the travel agency. You need to check some important features such as the size of the dining area, waiting lounge, the parking area for busses, number of elevators, room size, meeting hall etc.

**Payment:** Where the participants will make the payment is another important issue you need to discuss before you determine your hotel. The participants pay directly to the hotel or they make their payment to the travel agency. The alumni can get the payment, too. In our case, receiving money from foreign resources required official permission. The process was too long and complicated. Although our

alumni was a registered NGO in Turkey, we decided to not to collect the money in the alumni's or one of the member's personal account. For SWYAA Turkey, the best option was to work with the travel agency.

It was very convenient to pay the full fee to the travel agency and let them to arrange everything for us, but we didn't want to buy all the services from the agency as it would be too expensive and result in higher participation fee. As a result, we bought the services that were compulsory to be bought through an agency from our travel agency and we arranged the rest ourselves. If we had let them prepare everything, it wouldn't have been our organization.

You need to make sure that the way you will get the payment is legal and won't cause you any trouble in the future.

Collecting the payment long before the program maybe a bit difficult as many people cannot finalize their program so long before, but it will make your life easier. You can pay your deposits and guarantee your place and services without any influence from the inflation or changing exchange rates.

**Exchange rate:** If you live in a country which is influenced by the changes in dollars and euros, and may have to make your payments in these currencies, you need to be very careful. Try to fix the rate in order not to lose any money.

**Reception:** What makes receptions exceptional is the national costumes. It is really appreciated that many people carry all these costumes from a long way just to wear it for a few hours and make the reception more colorful and meaningful. Therefore, it must be encouraged to wear national costumes during the receptions. You can do so by offering a prize for those who attend the receptions with the national costume.

Music is the indispensable part of the receptions. Live music is the best with a band who can play typical of your country's music. If you cannot afford it, you can hire a professional DJ. If you have an alumni member who can make music would be great help. The participants will enjoy it more.

**Participation fee:** Before you decide on the amount, make sure that you've planned everything in your program. Don't try to make a rough calculation before you elaborate on your program as things may cost more than you anticipated. There will always be hidden costs. You need to consider them before you make your final summation.



**Institutions to be visited:** While selecting the institutions to be visited, try to decide on the institutions working on similar topics with the discussion courses offered on board. Avoid institution from the same field. Variety is important to be able to address to each participant's interest area.

**Places to Visit:** It is important to take the participants to the most popular tourist attractions. However, don't feel that it is compulsory to take the participants to all of the worthwhile places as depending on the country and time of the visit, these places can be very crowded and it may be waste of time trying to visit them all at once. Therefore, those which are more convenient for a visit with big groups and don't require a lot of time can be visited. The participants can be given free time so that they can visit the other places by themselves or in small groups.

**Transportation:** One of most important component to make your program successful is arranging the transportation. The quality of the busses and mastery of the drivers in route selection and timing are important. In order to follow the program as you planned, you need to consider the route that the busses will take to get to your destination. If you live in a big and crowded city where there is a lot of traffic and if it is an old city with narrow roads where busses cannot move forward or have difficulty to take turnings, you may always stay behind the program.

The transportation between the airport and the hotel during the arrival and departure day can also be problematic. People will arrive and leave at very different times, so meeting people at the airport and sending off may be the most tiring part of the program. It is better to provide fixed airport shuttle time and announce it beforehand so that participants will take their time to come out of the departures at the airport. It will also prevent unnecessary exhaustion for the hosts due to waiting at the airport for long hours.

**Conference for Post-Program Activities:** No matter what you announce about the way how the conference will take place, there will be delegations which don't send their presentation materials in advance but leave it to the last minute. Actually, the conference is long enough to be able to give everybody an opportunity to talk as long as you can make the presenters keep with the stated timing. Therefore, try to be flexible and try to give everybody a chance to speak up even if they bring their presentation material at the very last minute.

**Food:** Try to include different restaurants which serve a variety of your country's cuisine on different days in your program. No need to mention that the restaurants must be big enough to accommodate the whole group or hygiene or the quality of the food. One thing you need to aware of can be that there are more than one toilet to prevent long queues. Don't forget that there will be vegetarians or people with different food allergies among the participants, so make sure you have a list of people who won't be able to eat the food you offer and there is something they can eat in the restaurant you arrange.

**Optional Tour:** The destination must be decided carefully. The participants feel that it is place which is worth to see. If the place is far from the place where the official program takes place, the transportation must be arranged carefully so that participants do not lose a lot of time on the way and miss the opportunities in the places to be visited.

As we have already mentioned, it is a big adventure, so there are many other issues to consider. We didn't mention some basics or too obvious things. However, there are many other features that can be discussed such as the way the orientation is held, who can be a good sponsor and how they can be convinced to support you etc. If other countries who have already hosted a GA can share their experiences and make comments, we can bring them together and prepare a general guideline that can be used in the organization of the future GAs.

The Global Assembly is a good opportunity to meet old and new friends, discuss SWY issues and share information about post-program activities. It also refreshes our memories, and reminds us the days we spent onboard together. It ties people together one more time.

To achieve a successful GA partly depends on the participants as well as the committee members organizing it. The preparation or the program itself is very challenging. The participants and the organizing team must work together to make the best of it. If the participants complain and criticize unnecessarily rather than cooperating with the committee members, nobody will enjoy the program.

While planning the program, we always considered that people will be travelling from very long distances and they will spend their only vacation in the GA. Therefore it mustn't be a waste of time, money and energy for them. They must enjoy every moment of it. We tried to do our best to make it an enjoyable, educating and exciting experience for everybody. Hope to see you in the next GA.

