

JENESYS2024 Malaysia-Japan Multicultural Exchange (Invitation Program for High School Students from Islamic Schools) Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】 16 high school students from Islamic schools in Malaysia were invited to Japan from January 8 to 15. Through religious, educational, and cultural exchange between Japan and Malaysia, the main objective of the program was to increase the students' understanding of and interest in Japan and Japan's multicultural society, and to build a network of friendship between the two countries.

【Participants】 Total: 16 participants (15 high school students from Islamic schools and 1 chaperone)

【Locations】 Tokyo 16, Fukuoka 16

【Schedule】

■ Online Pre-study Program :

Dec. 26 (Thu) 【Lecture on Japan】 “Attractiveness of Japan”

Lecturer: Mr. ODA Yuichi, Professor, Institute for Excellence in Educational Innovation (IEEI), Chiba University

【Pre-departure Orientation】

Set Period Prior to Arrival 【Task-based Learning (VOD)】 “Overview/Mission”, “Virtual Home Visit”, “Study Japanese Culture in Kyoto”, “Peace Tour in Hiroshima”, “Learning Japanese”

■ Invitation Program :

Jan. 8 (Wed) Arrival at Narita International Airport

【Post-arrival Orientation】

【Theme Related Lecture】 “Islam in Japan”

Lecturer: Mr. MIICHI Ken, Professor, Graduate School of Asia - Pacific Studies, Waseda University

Jan. 9 (Thu) Travel from Tokyo to Fukuoka

【Observation】 TAKAMIYA Environment Museum

【Theme Related Observation】 Kokura Castle, Yasaka Shrine

【Cultural Experience】

Kokura Castle Japanese Garden, Making Kokura-ori keychain straps

Jan. 10 (Fri) 【School Exchange】 Keiai High School

【Meeting with the Host Families, Homestay】

Jan. 11 (Sat) 【Homestay】

Jan. 12 (Sun) 【Homestay】



【Farewell Party with the Host Families】

Travel from Fukuoka to Tokyo

Jan. 13 (Mon)	【Theme Related Observation, Exchange】 Tokyo Camii and Diyanet Turkish Culture Center 【Observation】 Tokyo National Museum
Jan. 14 (Tue)	【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, confirming social media posts, preparation of action plans) 【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans
Jan. 15 (Wed)	Departure from Narita International Airport







2. Program Photos

Online Pre-study Program

	
December 26, 2024 【Lecture on Japan】 "Attractiveness of Japan"	December 26, 2024 【Lecture on Japan】 Commemorative photo

Invitation Program

	
January 8, 2025 【Theme Related Lecture】 "Islam in Japan"	January 9, 2025 【Observation】 TAKAMIYA Environment Museum
	
January 9, 2025 【Theme Related Observation】 Kokura Castle	January 9, 2025 【Theme Related Observation】 Yasaka Shrine

	
<p>January 9, 2025 【Cultural Experience】 Making Kokura-ori keychain straps</p>	<p>January 10, 2025 【School Exchange】 Keiai High School</p>
	
<p>January 12, 2025 【Farewell Party with the Host Families】</p>	<p>January 13, 2025 【Theme Related Observation, Exchange】 Tokyo Camii and Diyanet Turkish Culture Center</p>
	
<p>January 14, 2025 【Reporting Session】</p>	<p>January 14, 2025 【Reporting Session】 Group photo</p>

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ High School Student

The homestay activity really took the exchange program to the next level because of how it challenges us to share and embrace our culture with a Japanese family. Because of this, I really enjoyed sharing my culture and religion through exchanging gifts, praying in their homes and more. I also had to adapt with the daily Japanese lifestyle such as being very disciplined and punctual by following the activities decided by my family.

◆ **High School Student**

Honestly, my deepest desire to visit Japan stems from my yearning to learn and embrace their values. The Japanese people are remarkably kind-hearted, deeply respectful, and uphold a profound sense of cleanliness. They live with such integrity that theft seems almost non-existent. To me, Japan embodies the essence of a safe and harmonious society. One of the most striking images that left me in awe was witnessing bicycles left unattended and unlocked on the streets, yet untouched by anyone. It's a testament to the unparalleled trust and discipline that permeates their culture—a rare and inspiring phenomenon in today's world.

◆ **High School Student**

As for now, I really enjoyed the Kokura-Ori making experience. Not only was it interesting, the way of making a kokura-ori was really easy which made it really enjoyable. The staff at Kokura Castle were also very kind and helpful to us. To mention, the homestay experience was also an unforgettable one. My host family was really kind towards me and my friend throughout our 3-days stay. I also promised my host family to come to Kitakyushu again and meet them in the future. I will make sure to treasure those memories that I made here forever.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ **Exchange School Faculty**

I knew that different cultures and religions have their own rules, but this program taught me a lot about food related rules. From the selection of menus and ingredients to the preparation of cooking utensils, it was an experience that I had never had before in dealing with international students. On the day of the program, I was relieved to see that the participants were having second helpings of both the yakiudon and mochi. The kinako mochi (mochi with sweetened soybean powder) was popular, perhaps because the country has a large, sweet tooth.

Even though the school was temporarily closed on the day of the program, many students, mainly from extracurricular school clubs, still gathered to help out, and although I was worried that they might not be too keen to communicate, they engaged with each other more than I expected. I am glad that our school students were able to participate in an international exchange without even having to go abroad. Thank you so much for this wonderful opportunity.

◆ **Host Family**

Through this exchange, I felt that we were able to deepen our understanding of different cultures and communicate without words. I realized the importance of respecting foreign cultures and ways of thinking and being willing to learn together.

5. Disseminations by the Participants (excerpt), Articles, etc.



January 9, 2025 (Instagram)

Kitakyushu Day #1

Takamiya Environmental Museum was highly informative and such an eye-opening experience. The most impressive part would most definitely be the way the city overcame sea and air pollution and successfully restored the city to its original condition which were both beautiful and clean in just 30 years. The fact that Kitakyushu is now one of the most environmentally conscious cities is definitely admirable. Other countries could certainly learn a lot from this and without this opportunity provided by #jenesis_asean, I wouldn't have had the pleasure of learning more about the environment and experiencing the Takamiya Environmental Museum.



January 11, 2025 (Instagram)

Last night with otosan and okasan (mom and dad), was the best night ever in my life. They had us wear the traditional Japanese clothes kimono and did a tea ceremony just for us. I wouldn't miss it for the world to live through these heartfelt memories that will be cherished forever.



January 12, 2025 (Instagram)

Japanese Foster Family

We would like to thank our families for their warm welcome to us. I would like to take this opportunity to apologize if we were rude in any way. We will definitely come back to Kitakyushu again and visit you with our family next time. Thank you very much.



January 11, 2025 (Keiai High School's blog)

"We had an exchange with high school students from Malaysia"



January 22, 2025 (M TOWN WEEKLY)

15 high school students from Malaysia visited Japan as part of the JENESYS Program









January 14, 2025 (Embassy of Malaysia's website)

Reporting Session of JENESYS Programme - Malaysia-Japan Multicultural Exchange (Invitation Program for High School Students from Islamic Schools)

6. Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plan at the Reporting Session (excerpt)

Locations: Tokyo, Fukuoka – Presentations by a total of 2 groups)

Group A		
		
<p>【Results of the Program】</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keiai High School <p>Students keep the school clean by changing their shoes before entering the school building, keeping the bathroom floors dry, and taking care of their own trash.</p> • Takamiya Environment Museum <p>Over a period of 30 years, Kitakyushu City overcame pollution through the cooperation of government, citizens, and factories to clean water and air.</p> • Kokura-ori weaving <p>There are similarities between Kokura-ori and Tenun in Malaysia, and there is durable fabric made in Kokura Castle.</p> <p>【Action Plan】</p> <p>Since the trash cans installed in schools are the root cause of a filthy environment, develop a “ONE STUDENT, ONE TRASHBAG” campaign in which each student carries a trash bag and is responsible for it, aiming to clean up the school premises.</p> <p>JENESYS participants, assisted by their teachers, will share their experiences in Japan and conduct a campaign for all students during the first week of the new school term (February).</p>		
Group B		
		
<p>【Results of the Program】</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reinforced language education through communication with Japanese people. • Learned about Japanese culture through tea ceremony and a visit to the Tokyo National Museum. • Learned how Kitakyushu implemented the 3Rs and overcame multiple environmental pollutions. <p>【Action Plan】</p> <p>Disseminate the Japanese attitude of punctuality and protection of national heritage through cultural awareness webinars and postings on social media and newspapers. We will also share the experience in Japan with family, friends, and neighbors through the same means and by practicing what we learned in daily life.</p>		

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)