

## JENESYS Singapore-Japan Social Welfare Exchange (Invitation Program) Report

### 1. Program Overview

#### 【Objectives and Overview】

Students from Singapore majoring in social welfare visited Japan from January 20 to 27, 2026 to study the theme of declining birthrates and population aging. The program was conducted to deepen their understanding of Japan's social welfare initiatives by providing opportunities to observe efforts related to elderly care policies, early childhood education, measures addressing hikikomori (social withdrawal), and cutting-edge technologies such as welfare robots. The program also aimed to encourage the participants to develop networks with professionals in the social welfare field.

#### 【Participants】

Total: 6 participants (5 high school students, vocational students and 1 chaperone from Singapore)

#### 【Locations】 Tokyo 6, Hokkaido 6

#### 【Schedule】

##### ■ Online Pre-study Program :

Jan. 13 (Tue)                      **【Lecture on Japan】 “Japanese Society and Culture”**  
                                          Lecturer: Ms. ANDRADE Hisami, "Lecture on Japan" Lecturer, JICE  
                                          **【Pre-departure Orientation】**  
 Set Period Prior to Arrival **【Task-based Learning (VOD)】** “Lecture on Japan”, “Virtual Home Visit”,  
                                          “Message from Minamisanriku”, “Study Japanese Culture in Kyoto”, “Learning  
                                          Japanese”

##### ■ Invitation Program :

2026

Jan. 20 (Tue)                      Arrival at Haneda Airport  
                                          **【Post-arrival Orientation】**  
                                          **【Theme Related Observation】**  
                                          Fukagawa Enmichi (multi-generational welfare facility)  
 Jan. 21 (Wed)                      **【Theme Related Lecture & Observation】** “Santa Fe Garden Hills” (Nursing and  
                                          Healthcare complex), Social Welfare Corporation ZENKOUKAI  
                                          **【Observation】** Asakusa  
                                          Travel from Tokyo to Hokkaido  
 Jan. 22 (Thu)                      **【Theme Related Lecture, Observation】**

Lecture and visit to the Health and Welfare Department of Hakodate City  
 “Building Inclusive Communities in a Society with Low Birthrates and an Aging Population”

Lecturers:

Community Welfare Division, Health and Welfare Department, City of Hakodate

Mr. ITO Hiroshi, Section Chief

Ms. YAMADA Sayaka, Senior Staff

【Cultural Experience】 Tea ceremony experience

【School Exchange】

Hokkaido University of Education Hakodate Junior High School

【Observation】 Exploring Hakodate's Historic Western District and Night view from Mt. Hakodate

Jan. 23 (Fri) 【Cultural Experience】 Japanese calligraphy experience

【Theme Related Lecture】

“Introduction of the Local Cafeteria “Manmaru” Project”

Lecturer: Ms. TAKAHASHI Yumi

【Meeting with the Host Families】

Jan. 24 (Sat)

【Homestay】

Jan. 25 (Sun)

【Homestay】

【Farewell Party with the Host Families】

Travel from Hokkaido to Tokyo

Jan. 26 (Mon) 【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, confirming social media posts, preparation of action plans)

【Observation】 Meiji Jingu

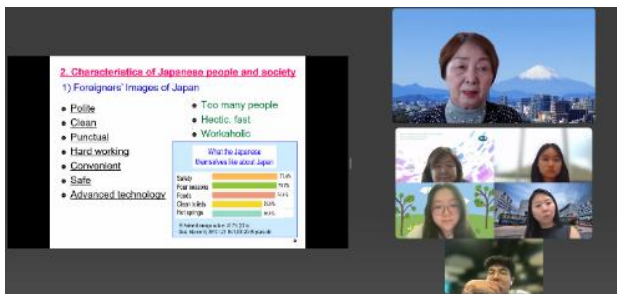
【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans

Jan. 27 (Tue)

Departure from Haneda Airport

## 2. Program Photos

Online Pre-study Program

|                                                                                     |                                                                                      |
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|  |  |
| <p>January 13, 2026 【Lecture on Japan】</p>                                          | <p>January 13, 2026 【Pre-departure Orientation】</p>                                  |

## Invitation Program

|                                                                                                            |                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                           |                         |
| <p>January 20, 2026 【Post-arrival Orientation】</p>                                                         | <p>January 20, 2026 【Theme Related Observation】<br/>Fukagawa Enmichi</p>                                  |
|                          |                        |
| <p>January 21, 2026 【Theme Related Lecture, Observation】 Santa Fe Garden Hills</p>                         | <p>January 21, 2026 【Theme Related Lecture, Observation】 Hakodate City, Health and Welfare Department</p> |
|                         |                       |
| <p>January 21, 2026 【School Exchange】<br/>Hokkaido University of Education Hakodate Junior High School</p> | <p>January 23, 2026 【Cultural Experience】<br/>Japanese calligraphy experience</p>                         |

|                                                                                                   |                                                                                      |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                  |    |
| <p>January 23, 2026 【Theme Related Lecture】<br/>Introduction of the Local Cafeteria “Manmaru”</p> | <p>January 23, 2026 【Meeting with the Host Families】</p>                             |
|                 |   |
| <p>January 24, 2026 【Homestay】</p>                                                                | <p>January 25, 2026<br/>【Farewell Party with the Host Families】</p>                  |
|                |  |
| <p>January 26, 2026 【Reporting Session】</p>                                                       | <p>January 26, 2026【Reporting Session】Group photo</p>                                |

### 3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

#### ◆ High School Student

The host family was very memorable as they were very nice and sweet and really helped me experience the most of Japan's culture and traditions while also having fun.

The school exchange (at a junior high school) also really opened my eyes to the curriculum and school environment which was very heartwarming as well as the inviting students who left a lasting impression on me.



◆ **High School Student**

I had very good experiences at the different welfare facilities, learning about how the Japanese people provide welfare through technology was very interesting and eye opening. I also enjoyed myself a lot during my homestay as I got to experience what it's like to stay in a Japanese family, and I myself was very welcomed by my host parents.

◆ **High School Student**

The first thing I remember the most was the homestay. All 3 families were so lovely and thoughtful in their regard for us, and were all so welcoming. My host family was so sweet and we engaged in many meaningful conversations about our countries and made very memorable memories. It made me determined to visit Hakodate again.

The next memorable thing would be the visits to the social welfare facilities. The spirit of community was so prevalent and eye opening, as it really integrated people from children to elderly.

**4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)**

◆ **Observation Destination Representative**

We were deeply impressed by the genuine interest each participant showed in our technology-based approach to eldercare. With every explanation we provided, we received warm, positive reactions and thoughtful questions, which made the experience truly rewarding for our staff as well. Their enthusiasm encouraged us, as hosts, to speak not only about the systems themselves but also about concrete ways they might be applied in real-world settings, which we were able to share with joy thanks to their engagement.

One of the greatest outcomes of this program was that the participants recognized the potential of using technology in care settings and considered the practical examples from Japan as viable options. Furthermore, the Q&A session with the students was fresh and the questions were unique, making this visit an exceptionally valuable learning experience for everyone there.

We sincerely hope that the insights gained through this visit will, in some way, contribute to enhancing the quality of eldercare in Singapore and to advancing the use of technology in this important field.

◆ **Observation Destination Representative**

Through our interactions with the participants, we were able to feel a much closer connection to Singapore.

They also sincerely answered our questions, allowing us to learn about the current state of local communities and community life in Singapore—insights that will be valuable for my own work.

◆ **Exchange School Student**

When the participants introduced the schools they attend in Singapore, we were surprised to learn how many different academic programs they offer and how many students study there. It made us realize once again that educational systems can differ significantly from country to country. We also found the Singaporean participants to be very friendly and approachable. During the exchange class we played board games together, and this is when I realized that even if we speak different languages, we can still have fun together through a shared activity.

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

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|  <p>on 20th Jan, we visited Fukagawa Enmichi, which changed how I see welfare spaces. Instead of feeling institutional or "facility-like", the place felt like a neighborhood. What stood out to me most was how intentionally multigenerational it is. The elderly day service on the first floor, after-school care and child-rearing on the second floor aren't kept separate, rather, shared spaces integrate everyone together. Seeing elderly residents and children recognize each other even outside the building made the idea of community feel very real.</p> <p>I was also struck by how the space is time-shared. Its function shifts throughout the day, from childcare, student activities, and book clubs, so the building is fully utilized. It never felt rigid or overly controlled, and people were generous about noise, and even everyone from pregnant mothers to fathers on childcare leave felt welcome.</p> <p>Recycled shrine tiles, a garden built over years with children and parents, really showed how thoughtful the planning was. In a dense city like Tokyo, Fukagawa Enmichi showed me that integrating generations isn't just efficient, but also makes everyday life warmer, more meaningful, and more sustainable.</p> <p>#enesys_asean @ice_exchange</p> <p>enesys</p> <p>Say something...</p> |  <p>We got the chance to visit an ageing facility in Hakodate, Hokkaido on the 22nd of Jan, 2026 and attended a lecture by the staff members of the Hakodate City, Health and Welfare Department. We managed to learn more about the social welfare issues faced by the Hakodate community, ranging from seniors to young adults and also got the chance to understand the solutions in place to tackle these issues.</p> <p>One example would be an ageing facility in Hakodate city. Seniors can visit this facility to participate in activities such as traditional tea ceremony and onsen to boost social interactions among people living in the community, improving their overall well-being. Health talks are also being hosted to improve seniors' awareness on chronic conditions.</p> <p>Ultimately, I learned that community spirit and togetherness is key in improving our social welfare in a society.</p> <p>#enesys_asean @ice_exchange</p> <p>Say something</p> |
| <p>January 26, 2026 (Instagram)</p> <p>Vocational Student</p> <p>On 20th Jan, we visited Fukagawa Enmichi, which changed how I see welfare spaces. Instead of feeling institutional or "facility-like", the place felt like a neighborhood. What stood out to me most was how intentionally multigenerational it is. The elderly day service on the first floor, after-school care and child-rearing on the second floor aren't kept separate, rather, shared spaces integrate everyone together. Seeing elderly residents and children recognize each other even outside the building made the idea of community feel very real. I was also struck by how the space is time-shared. Its function shifts throughout the day, from childcare, student activities, and book clubs, so the building is fully utilised. It never felt rigid or overly controlled, and people were generous about noise, and even everyone from pregnant mothers to fathers on childcare leave felt welcome.</p> <p>Recycled shrine tiles, a garden built over years with children and parents, really showed how thoughtful the planning was. In a dense city like Tokyo, Fukagawa Enmichi showed me that integrating generations isn't just efficient, but also makes everyday life warmer, more meaningful, and more sustainable.</p>                                                                                                     | <p>January 26, 2026 (Instagram)</p> <p>Vocational Student</p> <p>We got the chance to visit an ageing facility in Hakodate, Hokkaido on the 22nd of Jan, 2026 and attended a lecture by the staff members of the Hakodate City, Health and Welfare Department. We managed to learn more about the social welfare issues faced by the Hakodate community, ranging from seniors to young adults and also got the chance to understand the solutions in place to tackle these issues.</p> <p>One example would be an aging facility in Hakodate city. Seniors can visit this facility to participate in activities such as traditional tea ceremony and onsen to boost social interactions among people living in the community, improving their overall well-being. Health talks are also being hosted to improve seniors' awareness on chronic conditions.</p> <p>Ultimately, I learned that community spirit and togetherness is key in improving our social welfare in a society.</p>                                                                               |



January 26, 2026 (Instagram)

Vocational Student

In the charming port city of Hakodate, I immersed myself in a traditional Japanese calligraphy class, a serene escape amid the snowy landscapes. Our instructor, a soft-spoken master, began by teaching us to prepare the ink—grinding a solid ink stick (sumi) against a stone slab with water in circular motions until it transformed into a velvety black liquid, symbolizing patience and mindfulness.

We then explored the brushes, crafted from animal fur like weasel or horse hair, each type yielding unique strokes: soft goat hair for fluid, expressive lines, and stiffer badger for bold precision. Holding the brush vertically, we practiced basic strokes—the horizontal “yokosen” for stability, the vertical “tatesen” evoking strength, the dot “ten” representing focus, and the hook “haku” for dynamic energy. Each carried profound meanings: a sweeping curve might embody harmony, while a firm press denoted resilience.

Culminating the session, I inscribed “kan sha” (感謝), meaning gratitude—a two-kanji word that flowed with intention, the first character balancing curves and dots for “feeling,” the second



January 26, 2026 (Instagram)

Vocational Student

Visiting Manmaru was an eye-opening experience for me! As a future preschool educator, I'm so impressed with the initiatives that they have for the community and the people in the neighborhood. Through our lecture, we learned about how the people who show up for Manmaru are all equal, and as they are supported, they can also be a supporter. Therefore, this promotes social interaction between people of the community.

My initiative that was shared & what I felt aligned with what I learn in early childhood development and care was Junkan Shokudo (Cycle of Life) where children, adults and people of the community come together to plant vegetables → harvest them → cook them, and leftovers will be used as fertilizer to plant more vegetables! As an educator, I thought that it was an amazing initiative to teach children the cycle of plants as well as taking responsibility in taking care of the plants & vegetables that they grow.

grounding it in “thanks.” The experience left me with a deeper appreciation for this art form’s meditative essence, blending technique with philosophy in every brushstroke.



January 29, 2026 (Hokkaido International Exchange Center’s Instagram)

#### JENESYS Program

Excited with the first snow, gameplay with junior high school students, studying about a kid's cafeteria in a temple, playing in Kamakura, and spent wonderful time with host family.



January 24, 2026 (Hokkaido University of Education Hakodate Junior High School’ website)

An article published in the Hokkaido Shimbun on January 24, 2026, introduced the English class conducted by our second-year students on Thursday, January 22. As part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ JENESYS Program—Japan-Singapore Social Welfare Exchange (Invitation Program)—five students and one accompanying staff member from Singapore visited our school. They each gave self-introductions and presented aspects of their own culture.

The newspaper article, published under the headlines “Visit from Singaporean Students” and “Introducing Hakodate’s Culture Through Sugoroku,” featured photographs taken during the class as well as comments from our students following the lesson.





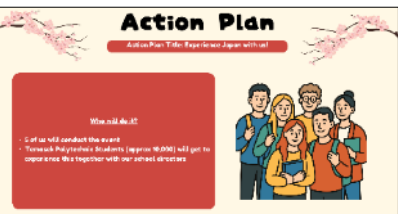
March 4, 2026 (Social Welfare Corporation ZENKOUKAI's website)

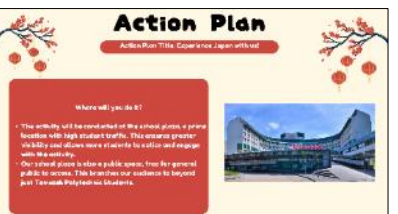
“Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ JENESYS program - Visit by Singaporean Students Studying Social Welfare”

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

Locations: Tokyo, Hokkaido – Presentation by 1 group







### 【Results of the Program】

#### ◆ Learnings from the program

Before visiting Japan, our impression was that it was full of delicious foods such as ramen, matcha, and sushi, as well as many famous tourist destinations like Shibuya, Osaka, and Mount Fuji. We also imagined that Japanese people were generally polite and modest.

When we actually visited, we found that this politeness extended not only to formal bows and greetings but also to warm hospitality and thoughtful flexibility, making us feel welcomed almost like family. People we had assumed to be conservative and serious turned out to have a good sense of humor, and once we became comfortable with each other, they lightened the mood with jokes. Moreover, the gracefulness of their gestures and the refined movements in tea ceremonies showed us that an attention to detail is deeply rooted in Japanese culture.

The family we stayed with was especially memorable for their kindness—preparing meals and planning visits according to our preferences. The food was even better than we had expected beforehand, and we were deeply impressed not only by the flavors but also by the care reflected in the presentation and the effort put into each dish.

#### ◆ Learnings about Social Welfare

Before coming to Japan, we believed that Japan's social support systems were primarily composed of economic assistance, medical services, and facilities for the elderly. However, once we arrived, we found a wide range of social support initiatives that combine multiple fields, and we were impressed by their breadth and complexity.

What struck us most was that various themes were embedded within support networks and pathways,

allowing them to complement one another. The emphasis on community was a clear example of this. Through our experiences at the Local Cafeteria “Manmaru” in Hakodate and during our homestay, we learned that great care is taken to create spaces where individuals can be themselves and where mutual reliance and support naturally circulate.

We were also impressed by the advanced use of technology. During lectures and site visits at ZENKOUKAI, we learned that the incorporation of caregiving robots and digital management systems significantly reduces the burden on caregivers while improving the quality of life for service users.

Finally, we were deeply struck by the existence of social spaces where people from diverse backgrounds can gather to share experiences and concerns. These spaces help prevent social isolation and support the continuity of everyday social and health-related activities, demonstrating the significant role social welfare plays in sustaining community well-being.

#### 【Action Plan】

“Experience Japan with Us!”

We are organizing an event aimed at helping students deepen their understanding of Japanese culture. The event will feature three hands-on activity programs:

##### 1. Kimono Exhibition Booth

We will display photos of calligraphy, Japanese cuisine, and visits to social welfare facilities on a kimono-shaped exhibition board, while our members introduce these experiences to participating students. We will also show videos from our trip to Japan to give a visual sense of the program.

##### 2. Clay Sushi-Making Activity

Participants will create sushi-shaped keychains using paper clay, which they can take home as a souvenir from the event.

##### 3. Tea Ceremony Experience

Based on our tea ceremony experience in Japan, we will provide students with the opportunity to prepare matcha using authentic tea utensils, allowing them to feel the atmosphere of traditional Japanese culture.

In preparation for the event, we will gather materials such as exhibition boards, tea utensils, and clay, and will set up and check the booths in advance. We will also use social media to introduce our activities and share the preparation process to raise student interest. After the event, we will post reflections and highlights on social media to share the outcomes.

By engaging with Japanese culture and encountering diverse values, we hope to support students in developing a deeper understanding of different cultures.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)