

JENESYS2025 Brunei-Japan Martial Arts (Budo) Exchange (Dispatch Program of Japanese University Students) Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】

Six Japanese undergraduate and graduate students visited Brunei under the theme “Budo Exchange.” By introducing the history, philosophy, and cultural foundations of Japanese martial arts (karate, kendo, and judo), the participants helped deepen the understanding of the students and practitioners they interacted with. At the same time, they experienced firsthand how Japanese martial arts are received and practiced in Brunei, fostering mutual friendship and appreciation.

During their homestays, the participants stayed in traditional Bruneian houses, gaining deeper intercultural understanding through daily family life. By actively sharing the appeal of Japanese martial arts with the people they met in Brunei, they helped spark greater interest in Japan and contributed to strengthening networks that support further friendship between the two countries.

【Participants】 Total: 6 undergraduate students and graduate students from Japan

【Locations】 Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei 6

【Schedule】

■ Online Pre-study Program :

Aug. 26 (Tue)	【Orientation】 First Joint Orientation 【Lecture】 “Welcome to ASEAN-JAPAN Centre” Joint implementation with FY2025 JENESYS ASEAN dispatch programs Lecturer: Mr. WATANABE Mitsuo, Tourism Exchange Team, ASEAN-Japan Centre (ASEAN Promotion Centre on Trade, Investment and Tourism)
Nov. 5 (Wed)	【Lecture】 Theme Related Lecture “Lecture on Judo & Budo in Brunei” Lecturer: Mr. Md Ali Rashid MD ALIPAH, President, Brunei Darussalam National Judo Federation
Jan. 21 (Wed)	【Participant Briefing】

■ Dispatch Program :

Jan. 28 (Wed)	【Pre-departure Orientation】 Departure from Narita International Airport Arrival at Brunei International Airport (Bandar Seri Begawan)
Jan. 29 (Thu)	【Courtesy Call】 Mr. KIKUTA Yutaka, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan

to Brunei Darussalam, Embassy of Japan in Brunei Darussalam

【Briefing】 “About the Operations of the Japanese Embassy”

Speaker:

Ms. OZAKI Maria, Third Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Brunei Darussalam

【Exchange】 Exchange with JENESYS alumni

【Courtesy Call】

Youth and Sports Department, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports

Ms. HAJAH UMI KALTHUM BINTI HAJI ABDUL KARIM, Director

Mr. HAJI MOHAMAD ROSFAZILAH BIN HAJI YUSLY, Deputy Director

【Observation】

Site visits in the city (Night Market, Exchange with JENESYS Alumni)

Jan. 30 (Fri)

【Cultural Experience】 Traditional Martial Art: Pencak Silat

【Exchange】 Visits to Martial Arts Dojos (Karate, Kendo, Judo)

Jan. 31 (Sat)

【School Exchange】

Pengiran Anak Puteri Hajah Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah Secondary School

【Meeting with the Host Families, Homestay】

Feb. 1 (Sun)

【Homestay】

Feb. 2 (Mon)

【Observation, Cultural Experience】 Omar Ali Saifuddien Mosque (commonly known as the “Old Mosque”), Jame' Asr Hassanil Bolkiah Mosque (commonly known as the “New Mosque”), Royal Regalia Museum, Water Village

【Workshop】 Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans)

Feb. 3 (Tue)

【Reporting Session】 Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans

Departure from Brunei International Airport (Bandar Seri Begawan)

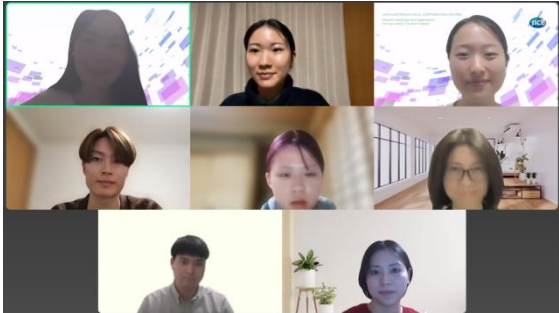
Feb. 4 (Wed)

Arrival at Narita International Airport

2. Program Photos

Online Pre-study Program

	
August 26, 2025 【Lecture】 “Welcome to ASEAN-JAPAN Centre”	August 26, 2025 【Lecture】 Commemorative photo

 LECTURE ON JUDO & BUDO IN BRUNEI 5 NOVEMBER, 2025	
November 5, 2025 【Lecture】 Theme Related Lecture “Lecture on Judo & Budo in Brunei”	November 5, 2025 【Lecture】 Commemorative photo
	
January 21, 2026 【Participant Briefing】 Dispatch Program	January 21, 2026 【Participant Briefing】
	
January 29, 2026 【Courtesy Call】 Mr. KIKUTA Yutaka, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Brunei Darussalam, Embassy of Japan in Brunei Darussalam	January 29, 2026 【Exchange】 Exchange with JENESYS Alumni
	
January 29, 2026【Courtesy Call】Youth and Sports Department, Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports	January 29, 2026 【Observation】 Site visits in the city (Night Market)

	
January 30, 2026 【Cultural Experience】 Traditional Martial Art: Pencak Silat	January 30, 2026 【Exchange】 Visits to Martial Arts Dojos (Karate)
	
January 30, 2026 【Exchange】 Visits to Martial Arts Dojos (Kendo)	January 30, 2026 【Exchange】 Visits to Martial Arts Dojos (Judo)
	
February 1, 2026 【School Exchange】 Pengiran Anak Puteri Hajah Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah Secondary School	February 1, 2026 【Homestay】
	
February 2, 2026 【 Observation, Cultural Experience】 New Mosque	February 2, 2026 【 Observation, Cultural Experience】 Kampong Ayer (water village)

	
February 3, 2026 【Reporting Session】	February 3, 2026【Reporting Session】Group photo

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

◆ Undergraduate Student

- Martial art exchange (Pencak Silat)

Through interacting with members of the national team, I was able to learn about their traditional martial art and deepen my understanding. It was an experience that I would not normally have the chance to enjoy, and it truly felt like a genuine martial arts exchange. We were able to teach and learn from one another. In Pencak Silat, I saw techniques that included throws and kicks, which reminded me of a fusion of karate and judo.

- Martial art exchange (JUDO)

Even though we faced a language barrier, we were still able to connect heart-to-heart through martial arts. When speaking with people from another country with whom I share no common background, there are natural limits to how deeply we can communicate. However, through our shared interest in martial arts, we were able to build a connection and deepen our understanding of one another. I was also given the opportunity to teach some techniques upon request. I felt genuinely welcomed, and it made me want to participate even more.

◆ Undergraduate Student

The exchange with Pencak Silat national team and the Karate Federation were the highlights of the program. In the Pencak Silat exchange, I never expected to have a chance to experience Brunei's traditional martial art, so learning something completely new felt incredibly refreshing. The athletes and coaches welcomed us warmly and taught us with great care, which made me truly happy. Even though the time was short, they generously showed us a wide range of techniques, and the coaches praised me many times. I was especially delighted when they took the time to teach me a few additional techniques as a special bonus.

In the exchange with the Karate Federation, the training was quite intense, but I was very glad to be able to practice karate together with them. At the end, we held a friendly match, which became a wonderful memory.

◆ Undergraduate Student

What I enjoyed the most was the school exchange. I was truly surprised, and at the same time very happy, that the martial art I have practiced was welcomed so warmly. I sincerely hope that the number of Kendo practitioners in Brunei will continue to grow.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Cooperating Organization

The participants showed positive interest and engagement throughout the session. They were attentive during the briefing and activities and showed curiosity about karate training and youth sports development in Brunei. Overall, the program provided a good opportunity to strengthen mutual understanding and friendship through sports.

As our organization has previously participated in JENESYS programs, the exchange continues to strengthen our awareness of the importance of international cooperation and cultural exchange through sports. It also encourages our members, especially young athletes, to interact confidently with international participants and share their experiences.

In the future, we hope to continue supporting similar exchange programs and provide opportunities for young athletes to interact with international visitors. Programs like this help promote friendship, cultural understanding, and the positive values of sports.

◆ Exchange School Faculty

One of the most memorable aspects of the exchange was seeing the reactions of the student participants during the sessions. Many of them showed a sense of awe and excitement as they experienced the training and demonstrations. Despite their excitement, the students remained focused, attentive, and respectful throughout the activities, which reflected the values of Budo that were being shared.

It was also very encouraging to hear many students express a genuine interest in learning more about Japan. Their curiosity extended beyond martial arts such as kendo, karate, and judo, and included aspects of Japanese life, education, and culture. The smiles and enthusiasm of the participants made the exchange a truly memorable and wonderful experience for everyone involved.

One of the most noticeable changes has been the increased interest in martial arts and Budo among the students. Since the program, the number of students participating in kendo training has increased significantly, growing to approximately five times the original number.

In addition, several students have expressed interest in exploring other martial arts such as judo and karate. Some have already enrolled in local martial arts clubs to begin their training.

We hope that similar exchanges can continue in the future so that more students can benefit from these experiences and develop a deeper appreciation for Japanese culture and Budo.

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



February 5, 2026 (Instagram)

Undergraduate Student

●What we experienced with Fujin kendo

On January 30, 2026, we had the opportunity to practice with Fujin Kendo.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all the members of Fujin Kendo for their warm welcome and hospitality.

●What we come to realise

Through this experience, it became clear that kendo in Brunei is still in a developing stage.

Although the Brunei Kendo Federation exists, the positions of president and vice president are currently vacant. In addition, there is no dedicated dojo to Fujin kendo and practice spaces are shared with other sports. From these observations, we strongly felt that increasing the number of practitioners is the most important priority for the future growth of kendo in Brunei.

●What we can do going forward

We were given the opportunity to discuss future possibilities and we considered what actions we can take. One of the major barriers to starting kendo is the expensive cost of equipment.

In response, we hereby announce the launch of a project to collect unused kendo equipment in Japan and continue sending it to Brunei.



February 6, 2026 (Instagram)

Undergraduate Student

●Interaction with local JENESYS Alumni

We interacted with JENESYS alumni. They came to Japan last year for the program. They had presentations about what they did in Japan for us in the Embassy of Japan. We were glad to hear that they enjoyed Japanese life style and food such as kotatsu (こたつ), soba, miso soup and so on. We had lunch and dinner with them on the day. They also came to the Pasar Gadong (Gadong night market). We had a great time with JENESYS alumni.

●What we found

We found that people in Brunei are kind and friendly, so they have big hearts. They are also tolerant to other cultures even though Brunei is a strict Islamic country. We respect each culture.

●What we can do

In Japan, some people don't know about Brunei, especially their personality, so we will share this.

We can also keep in touch with JENESYS alumni and share other Japanese culture to get to know each other's culture more.

We hope we will see them in Japan or Brunei again.



Exchange with the Pencak Silat National Team

Team

On January 30, we received practical instruction in Pencak Silat from Brunei's national team and had the opportunity to experience this traditional martial art. We participated in various training activities, including warm-up exercises, form practice, striking drills, and throwing techniques. At the end of the session, we all enjoyed dancing Zumba together, and we were able to watch an intense and powerful demonstration match between the national team athletes.

What I Learned

Through this experience, I learned that Pencak Silat is not simply about acquiring techniques, but also about valuing spirituality and respect. In particular, I felt that the concept of zanshin after striking is similar to Japanese Kendo. In addition, dancing Zumba together at the end of the session showed me that the team values unity and a positive atmosphere, which I believe contributes to their strength.



February 7, 2026 (Instagram)

Undergraduate Student

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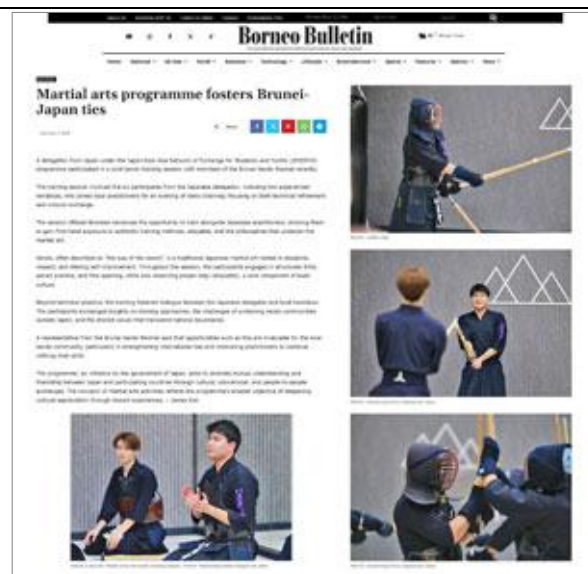
●What I Learned

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●What I Realized

Through this exchange, I realized that although the forms and movements of martial arts differ, the attitude of respecting others is something that Pencak Silat and Japanese martial arts share. I would like to continue learning more deeply about Brunei's unique traditional martial arts and culture in the future. Furthermore, I became aware that even when there is a language barrier, it is important to take the initiative to communicate actively.

Finally, we would like to sincerely thank the national team members for warmly welcoming us from Japan.



February 3, 2026 (Exchange School, Pengiran Anak Puteri Hajah Rashidah Sa'adatul Bolkiah Secondary School's Instagram) "JENESYS Brunei-Japan Martial Arts (Budo) Exchange"	February 7, 2026 (Borneo Bulletin.com) "Martial arts programme fosters Brunei – Japan ties"
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6. Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plan at the Reporting Session (excerpt)

Presentation by 1 group

		3.Action Plans • Presentation for students in Kagoshima, where one of our members was born and grown in February 2026. • Presentation for students in each universities in March. • A presentation on local radio of Okinawa and Kagoshima in March. • Assisting with efforts to help the Brunei Kendo Federation join the International Kendo Federation (FIK). • Debriefing session in institutions like embassy or companies in Japan related to Brunei in three months. • Gathering shinai and kendo protective equipment from various regions of Japan and donating them to Brunei.
【Results of the Program】 ◆ Learnings from the program • Brunei is a country grounded in strict Islamic principles, yet its people are remarkably open to other cultures, warm, and kind. Throughout the program, we were welcomed with great hospitality, and we were able to spend a truly meaningful time there. • Compared with Brunei, Japan has limited natural resources and faces frequent natural disasters, yet we were reminded of how effectively Japan has adapted to these challenges. • We saw many Japanese products in Brunei—from cars to daily goods—which reaffirmed the excellence of Japanese manufacturing. ◆ Learning from Martial Arts • We learned that Japan and Brunei share common values in martial arts, such as discipline, respect, and humility. • This reaffirmed for me that martial arts are something truly universal—something that can be embraced and appreciated across cultures. 【Action Plan】 • In February 2026, we will give a presentation in Kagoshima, hometown of one of the participants, to students about Brunei and the role of martial arts in Bruneian culture. • In March, we will give presentations at the universities we are each enrolled in. • We will speak about Brunei on radio programs in Okinawa and Kagoshima. • We will support the Brunei Kendo Federation in their efforts to join the International Kendo Federation. • Within three months, we will give a presentation about this visit at the Embassy of Brunei in Japan and at companies related to Brunei. • We will collect kendo bamboo swords and protective gear from across Japan and donate them to the Brunei Kendo Federation.		

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)