



JENESYS2024 The Philippines-Japan Development Exchange (Dispatch Program of Japanese University Students) Report

1. Program Overview

【Objectives and Overview】 A group of eight Japanese university students visited the Philippines (Manila) with the primary objective of learning about the current situation in the Philippines and its relationship with Japan. During their stay, the students attended lectures on topics such as infrastructure and poverty, and conducted site visits, which helped them deepen their understanding of Japan's development cooperation history and its significance. Furthermore, through exchanges and homestays, the participants and local students shared their cultures, exchanged opinions on development from local perspectives, and worked together to strengthen friendly relations between the two countries.

【Participants】 Total: 8 Japanese university students

【Locations】 Manila, the Philippines 8

【Schedule】

■ Online Pre-study Program :

Aug. 27 (Tue)	【Orientation】 First Joint Orientation 【Alumni Insights】 Alumni of FY2023 JENESYS ASEAN outbound programs 【Lecture】 “Welcome to ASEAN-JAPAN Centre” Joint implementation with FY2024 JENESYS ASEAN outbound programs Lecturer: Mr. WATANABE Mitsuo, Tourism Exchange Team, ASEAN Promotion Centre on Trade, Investment and Tourism (ASEAN-Japan Centre)
Nov. 12 (Tue)	【Lecture】 Lecture on the Country “General Information and Cultural Life of the Philippines” Lecturer: Ms. SHIMIZU Yuna, Country Officer, JICE JDS Project Office in the Philippines
Jan. 17 (Fri)	【Lecture】 Lecture on the Theme “The Activities of ACTION Inc. and Poverty” Lecturer: Mr. NISHIZAKI Kazuya, PR, ACTION Inc.
Feb. 13 (Thu)	【Participant Briefing】

■ Dispatch Program:

Feb. 25 (Tue)	【Pre-departure Orientation】 Departure from Narita International Airport Arrival at Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila
Feb. 26 (Wed)	【Courtesy Call】

Ms. MUKAIGAWA Yurie, Cultural Officer, Embassy of Japan in the Philippines
【Lecture】 Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Philippines Office
 “Overview of JICA Philippines Office”, “Transportation in the Philippines”

Lecturers:

Mr. KAWAHASHI Takehiro, Representative Economic Growth Section
 Professional Engineer

Ms. ABE Keiko, Coordinator, NGO Desk

Ms. Angela Pike, Program Officer

【Courtesy Call】 Ms. MICHELLE MAE GONZALES, COMMISSIONER-AT-LARGE, National Youth Commission

【Exchange】 Exchange with JENESYS Alumni

Feb. 27 (Thu) **【School Exchange】** University of the Philippines Diliman

【Observation】 ACTION, Inc. Visit to the poverty-stricken area: Barangay Tanza in the City of Navotas

Feb. 28 (Fri) **【School Exchange】** Lyceum of the Philippines University

【Observation】 San Agustin Church

【Meeting with the Host Families, Homestay】 Metro Manila, the Philippines

Mar. 1 (Sat) **【Homestay, Farewell Party with the Host Families】**

Mar. 2 (Sun) **【Observation】** Metro Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT), Rizal Park, Fort Santiago

Mar. 3 (Mon) **【Workshop】** Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program findings, preparation of action plans)

【Reporting Session】 Presentation of Program Findings and Action Plans

Departure from Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila

Mar. 4 (Tue) Arrival at Haneda Airport

2. Program Photos

Online Pre-study Program

August 27, 2024 【Lecture】 “Welcome to ASEAN-JAPAN Centre”	August 27, 2024 【Lecture】 Group photo

	
November 12, 2024 【Lecture】 Lecture on the Country “General Information and Cultural Life of the Philippines”	January 17, 2025 【Lecture】 Lecture on the Theme “The activities of ACTION Inc. and Poverty”
	
January 17, 2025 【Lecture】 Group photo	February 13, 2025 【Participant Briefing】

Dispatch Program

	
February 25, 2025 【Pre-departure Orientation】	February 26, 2025 【Courtesy Call】 Ms. MUKAIGAWA Yurie, Cultural Officer, Embassy of Japan in the Philippines



February 26, 2025 【Lecture】
“Overview of JICA Philippines Office”
“Transportation in the Philippines”



February 26, 2025 【Courtesy Call】 Ms. MICHELLE MAE GONZALES, COMMISSIONER-AT-LARGE, National Youth Commission (NYC)



February 26, 2025 【Exchange】
Exchange with JENESYS Alumni



February 27, 2025 【School Exchange】
University of the Philippines Diliman



February 27, 2025 【Observation】 ACTION, Inc.
(Barangay Tanza in the City of Navotas)



February 28, 2025 【School Exchange】
Lyceum of the Philippines University



February 28, 2025
【Meeting with the Host Families】



March 1, 2025 【Homestay】

	
March 2, 2025 【Observation】 Metro Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT), Ayala Station	March 2, 2025 【Observation】 Fort Santiago
	
March 3, 2025 【Reporting Session】	March 3, 2025 【Reporting Session】 Group photo

3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

Pre-study Program

◆ University Student (1st Pre-study program: 27/8/2024)

I learned the importance of maintaining relationships with the ASEAN region and realized that this exchange will also have an impact on Japan's future. I now feel a stronger sense of responsibility. I also had the opportunity to meet other participants for the first time, and by hearing the reasons why each person joined the program, I now know what is motivating them. Since we will be going into this program as a team, moving forward I would like to deepen my understanding of my fellow teammates.

◆ University Student (2nd Pre-study program: 12/11/2024)

We were able to gain a deeper understanding of the atmosphere in the Philippines, making this a highly valuable learning experience. We learned many things, including information that would have been difficult to obtain individually, which made us even more excited to be part of this program. I also liked how interacting with other members not only made us more eager to introduce Japanese culture but also provided us with a valuable opportunity to build new relationships.

◆ University Student (3rd Pre-study program: 17/1/2025)

Through the activities of ACTION Inc., we were able to learn in detail about the issues facing the Philippines. What left the strongest impression on us was the Grassroots Technical Cooperation Project. We found it particularly meaningful that they focus on supporting facility staff in their approach

to addressing child abuse, as this initiative is only possible due to their deep understanding of the issue. Additionally, learning that some children are unable to enter these facilities made us realize the need to consider how to better support communities where aid is not yet reaching sufficiently.

◆ **University Student (4th Pre-study program: 13/2/2025)**

Today's program helped me to fully understand the schedule. Since I now know where we will be visiting, I would like to do some research on each location before we actually visit them.

Additionally, since I am not very familiar with social media and have not yet been able to engage in promotional activities related to the Philippines, I would like to reach out to my group members and collaborate to effectively move forward.

Dispatch Program

◆ **University Student**

Through this program, I realized that culture encompasses not only food, dance, and lifestyle but also the way people live and interact. "The way people live and interact" is something that can only be truly understood by visiting the region and learning through direct communication. Although our homestay was short, we were all still able to appreciate the charm of the people in the Laguna region.

For example, we saw people cheerfully chatting as early as 5 AM, and the love they had for taking and sharing photos was something we rarely see in Japan. These moments reflected the unique warmth of the region. When thinking about cultural exchange, we often focus on tangible aspects such as food and dance. However, by also paying attention to the invisible elements—such as people's personalities and the atmosphere of a community—we can gain a deeper understanding of its true appeal.

This experience reinforced the importance of visiting a place in person, engaging in conversations with locals, and spending time together to truly connect with the culture.

◆ **University Student**

The site visit to the Navotas area, guided by ACTION Inc., left the strongest impression on me. Until now, my knowledge of poverty in the Philippines had come from media and textbooks. However, visiting the area in person, we witnessed people living in houses built over the river and saw trash scattered throughout the area. This experience made us truly realize how severe the cycle of poverty can be. Additionally, through conversations with the members of ACTION Inc. and local guides, we learned that many people move to Manila from rural areas in search of a better life but end up unable to secure jobs or housing, forcing them to live in such communities. This vicious cycle was deeply shocking to me, and during our visit to Manila, we also became aware of the significant gap between the rich and the poor.

◆ **University Student**

One of the most significant takeaways from this experience was seeing everything with my own eyes. While social issues are regularly discussed, there is limited information on the specific efforts being made to address them. Moreover, opportunities to directly witness the lives of those affected by these

issues are rare. However, through this program, we were able to see and feel firsthand that the situation is indeed changing for the better.

Additionally, the opportunity to interact with a wide range of people - including host families, university students, and JENESYS alumni - was an invaluable experience. Engaging with individuals from various backgrounds allowed us to gain insights from multiple perspectives and develop a broader understanding of different issues.

4. Voices from the Receiving Parties (excerpt)

◆ Cooperating Organization

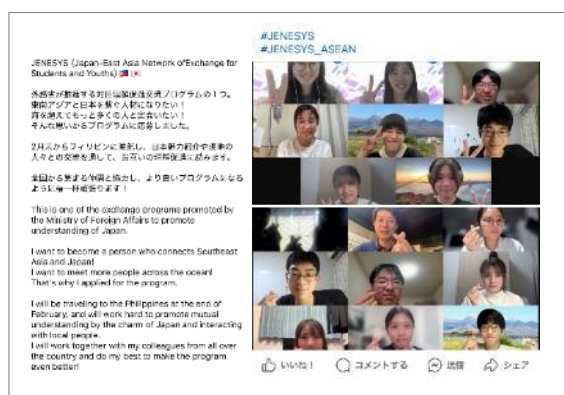
This program has the capability to help the students of both the Philippines and Japan in understanding each other's culture in various ways.

◆ Host Family

We were able to interact with the Japanese students and understand each other's culture.

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

Online Pre-study Program



January 21, 2025 (Facebook)

This is one of the exchange programs promoted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote understanding of Japan.

I want to become a person who connects Southeast Asia and Japan.

I want to meet more people across the ocean. That's why I applied for the program.

I will be traveling to the Philippines at the end of February and will work hard to promote mutual understanding by the charm of Japan and interacting with local people.

I will work together with my colleagues from all over Japan and do my best to make the program even better.

Dispatch Program

 Day 4が終わりました！ 本日まず最初に訪れたのは、フィリピン大学。フィリピンを代表する国立大学です。ほどほどに広大な敷地をもち、大学内のキャンパスが一望にわたっていました。また、その敷地が平らで、美しい景色が広がっています。フィリピン大学は、文化、経済、政治、社会、環境など、幅広い分野で研究を行っています。また、フィリピン大学は、国際的な交流を促進するための様々なプログラムを提供しています。 続いて訪問したのは、NPO ACTIONの事務所。活動内容や現状の話を聞いていただきました。その後は、フィリピン人の生活の現状を学ぶことができました。フィリピン人の生活の現状を学ぶことができました。フィリピン人の生活の現状を学ぶことができました。 夕食はスペイン料理とフィリピン料理を堪能しました。フィリピン料理は、スパイスが効いた、とてもおいしいです。フィリピン料理は、スパイスが効いた、とてもおいしいです。	 フィリピンでの滞在がもう1日終わりました！ まず最初に訪れたのは、セブ市にある、セブ市立大学。セブ市立大学は、セブ市を代表する国立大学です。ほどほどに広大な敷地をもち、大学内のキャンパスが一望にわたっていました。また、その敷地が平らで、美しい景色が広がっています。フィリピン大学は、文化、経済、政治、社会、環境など、幅広い分野で研究を行っています。また、フィリピン大学は、国際的な交流を促進するための様々なプログラムを提供しています。 続いて訪問したのは、NPO ACTIONの事務所。活動内容や現状の話を聞いていただきました。その後は、フィリピン人の生活の現状を学ぶことができました。フィリピン人の生活の現状を学ぶことができました。 夕食はスペイン料理とフィリピン料理を堪能しました。フィリピン料理は、スパイスが効いた、とてもおいしいです。フィリピン料理は、スパイスが効いた、とてもおいしいです。
February 27, 2025 (Instagram) The first place we visited today was the University of the Philippines. It is the national university representing the Philippines! We started with a campus tour of the expansive university grounds. After that, we had presentations and cultural demonstrations with the students about our respective cultures and schools! Each segment was fascinating and provided a valuable experience in understanding and respecting each other's cultures. We had lunch together with everyone at the University of the Philippines. Next, we visited the office of the NPO ACTION, where we learned about their activities and had a Q&A session. We then headed to the Navotas city area, where we witnessed the living conditions of people in poverty, with densely packed houses built over the river and a lot of garbage floating in the water. We were able to see firsthand the realities of their lives. For dinner, we had a fusion of Spanish and Filipino cuisine! The area around the restaurant looked like a European city. A big thank you to everyone who helped us today! Tomorrow, the homestay begins! Stay tuned for the report.	March 1, 2025 (Instagram) Halfway Through My Stay in the Philippines. Day 4 is Done. First, we headed to Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU). As Japanese students, we introduced the charm of Japan and shared cultural experiences. LPU students introduced us to traditional Filipino dances using bamboo and a fun game where we hit a bag filled with sweets while blindfolded. We also enjoyed popular Filipino sweets made from rice, fully immersing ourselves in Filipino culture. After our exchange with LPU, we visited San Agustin Church, a World Heritage site located nearby. Next, we visited the National Youth Commission (NYC) office again for a meet-and-greet with our host families. They welcomed us warmly, which made us very happy. Tomorrow, we will spend the entire day with our host families, experiencing various activities. We will share our experiences at each homestay later.



March 3, 2025 (Instagram)

After splitting into 3 groups, day 5 of our homestay Experience Has Come to an End!

Group 1 stayed with an affluent family in Manila. They enjoyed a lively evening dining at a restaurant where they could experience singing and dancing. The next day, they also visited a shopping mall. We are grateful for the delicious food and hospitality!

Group2 Homestay in a high-rise apartment in Manila city! I'm relieved to meet a kind host family and a cute dog. Refresh yourself at the pool and enjoy shopping & gourmet at one of Asia's largest malls. It was an unforgettable time to taste the charm of the Philippines!

Group 3 stayed with a farming family in Laguna. They experienced traditional Filipino cuisine and clothing, as well as toured the rice fields and farms. It was a precious experience that could never be had in Japan, and they were touched by the warmth of the family, including relatives and neighbors.

After the homestay, we returned to the National Youth Commission (NYC) office for a farewell party. We shared our experiences and expressed our gratitude. Although it was only a one-night stay, everyone was reluctant to part.

We are thankful for the valuable experiences and the hospitality of the host families and the arrangements made by the NYC members!

On Day 6, we plan to mainly tour Manila!



March 4, 2025 (Instagram)

The 7th and final day has come to an end!

This day was dedicated to final preparations and the report meeting.

Based on what we felt throughout this program, we created an "Action Plan" to address the problems we identified.

We discussed and devised a plan involving many university students from both Japan and the Philippines!

The details will be published in a future post. Stay tuned.

The report meeting was bustling with people, including representatives from the Japanese Embassy, JICA, NYC, and students from the universities we visited.

We were truly delighted when the university students expressed their desire to participate in our Action Plan.

We aim to transform what we learned and experienced this week into meaningful actions through the implementation of our Action Plan.

We plan to continue sharing various updates on this account in the future! Please stay tuned.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who supported us throughout this program.

Maraming Salamat po!



PHILIPPINES: LATEST | NYC WELCOMES JENESYS: THE PHILIPPINES-JAPAN CULTURAL EXCHANGE DELEGATES

Eight Japanese students from the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS) program visited the National Youth Commission as part of Japan's Friendship Ties Program. The delegates were warmly welcomed by NYC officials, including Commissioner-at-Large ASec. Michelle Mae Gonzales and Commissioner representing Luzon Atty. Reena Vivienne Pineda.

During her message, ASec. Gonzales encouraged the delegates to draw inspiration from the Filipino youth, just as the Filipino youth could find inspiration in them. She emphasized the importance of building lasting connections that will empower both countries' youth. She also expressed her gratitude to the Japan International Cooperation Center for spearheading the cultural exchange.

JENESYS Philippines Alumni Association members and youth volunteers engaged in interactive sessions with the delegates, sharing their experiences and best practices in youth development across both countries. Additionally, the delegates



LYCEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES UNIVERSITY: JENESYS OUTBOUND PROGRAM DELEGATES VISIT

The Lyceum of the Philippines University (LPU) – College of International Relations proudly hosted the second university visit of the JENESYS (Japan-East Asia Network of Students and Youths Exchange) Outbound program, welcoming Japanese delegates for a day of cultural immersion.

The event, held at the LPU Manila campus, aimed to strengthen the bonds between Filipino and Japanese students and foster deeper understanding between the two nations. The program commenced with warm opening remarks from Dean and Former Ambassador Maria Aniceta Aileen H. Bugarin, who emphasized the importance of cultural exchange in building lasting friendships.

Japanese delegates delivered engaging presentations, providing insights into their culture and perspectives. The LPU Dance Troupe captivated the audience with a vibrant performance of the traditional "Tinikling" dance, showcasing the richness of Filipino heritage. A lively "Pukpok Palayok" game further engaged the delegates, creating an atmosphere of fun and camaraderie.

For the Homestay Matching, Ms. Cristabeth Madrigal, Chief of the Social Marketing Division, addressed the delegates and host families to

February 27, 2025 (Instagram page of National Youth Commission (NYC))

“LATEST | NYC WELCOMES JENESYS: THE PHILIPPINES-JAPAN CULTURAL EXCHANGE DELEGATES”

Eight Japanese students from the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS) program visited the National Youth Commission as part of Japan's Friendship Ties Program. The delegates were warmly welcomed by NYC officials, including Commissioner-at-Large ASec. Michelle Mae Gonzales and Commissioner representing Luzon Atty. Reena Vivienne Pineda. During her message, ASec. Gonzales encouraged the delegates to draw inspiration from the Filipino youth, just as the Filipino youth could find inspiration in them. She emphasized the importance of building lasting connections that will empower both countries' youth. She also expressed her gratitude to the Japan International Cooperation Center for spearheading the cultural exchange.

JENESYS Philippines Alumni Association members and youth volunteers engaged in interactive sessions with the delegates, sharing their experiences and best practices in youth development across both countries. Additionally, the delegates gained insights into the key programs, projects, and activities of the NYC.

In her message of support, Atty. Pineda expressed her hope that the delegates will have a wonderful time during their stay in the Philippines and that they will gain valuable knowledge and insights from the program.

March 1, 2025 (Instagram page of National Youth Commission (NYC))

“JENESYS OUTBOUND PROGRAM DELEGATES VISIT LYCEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES UNIVERSITY; MET FOSTER FAMILIES FOR HOMESTAY MATCHING”

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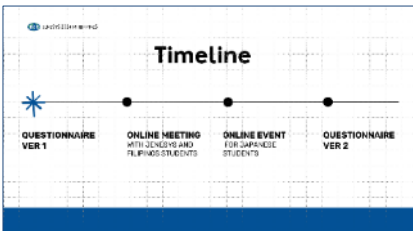
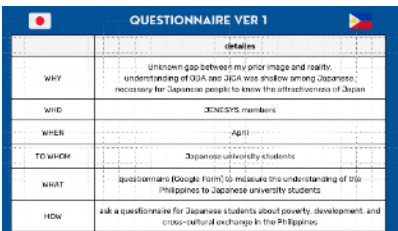
During their stay, the delegates will visit and tour universities in Manila for school exchanges and homestay matching.

express her gratitude.

A key component of the day was the homestay matching, where delegates were paired with Filipino host families. This initiative will allow the Japanese students to immerse themselves in Filipino daily life, experiencing the warmth and generosity for which Filipinos are known.

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

Presentation by 1 group

	details
WHY	Unknown gap between my prior image and reality; understanding of ODA and JICA was shallow among Japanese; necessary for Japanese people to know the attractiveness of Japan
WHO	JENESYS members
WHEN	April
TO WHOM	Japanese university students
WHAT	Questionnaire (Google Form) to measure the understanding of the Philippines to Japanese university students
HOW	ask a questionnaire for Japanese students about poverty, development, and cross-cultural exchange in the Philippines

【Results of the Program】

◆ Learnings about Poverty:

We witnessed the harsh reality of poverty in various parts of the Philippines. We were deeply shocked by the densely populated residential area along the river in Navotas City, which we visited with the guidance of ACTION, Inc. This area was vastly different from the environment in which we were raised. The formation of the region is linked to a complex issue where people who migrated from rural areas to the city have been unable to build stable lives. We came to realize that addressing poverty requires not only economic support but also comprehensive efforts such as job creation and regional development.

◆ Learnings about Development Exchange:

The social loss caused by traffic congestion in the Metro Manila area is estimated to be about 3.5 billion pesos (approximately 8 billion yen) per day. JICA respects the local voices and supports sustainable development through the renovation of the MRT and road improvements. We had many opportunities to pass through the overpasses that JICA was involved in constructing, but we realized that, unless one is mindful, it is easy to overlook the contributions Japan makes. We felt that there is a need to find ways to better communicate the importance of such developments to a larger audience.

◆ Learnings about Cultural Exchange:

Through cultural exchange in the Philippines, we learned the importance of cross-cultural understanding and saw first-hand how diverse cultures are coexisting through activities such as participating in the traditional dance Tinikling and living with our host families.

Through conversations with one of the host family members that is a conductor of traditional folk music, we also learned that music serves as a means of conveying history and identity. Our encounter with our respective host families made us realize that such experiences not only foster understanding of others but also provide an opportunity for people to reflect on their own culture.

【Action Plan】

1. We will conduct a survey targeting Japanese university students in April. The program participants will use an online form to assess Japanese students' understanding of the Philippines. The survey will focus on themes such as poverty, development, and cross-cultural exchange. Through this research, we aim to identify the gap between Japanese perceptions of the Philippines and its actual situation while deepening their understanding of Japan's ODA (Official Development Assistance) and the role of JICA.
2. In May, the program participants and the Filipino students we engaged with during the program will analyze the results of the April survey during an online meeting. Following this, we will work together to create a presentation introducing the current situation in the Philippines, which will be delivered to Japanese university students. This process also aims to help Filipino students deepen their understanding of Japan's ODA. By incorporating local students' perspectives on poverty and development, we strive to make the content more comprehensive and insightful.
3. In June, we will hold an online event for Japanese university students, where Filipino students will present on their country's current situation and the survey findings. A Q&A session will follow, facilitating mutual learning through interactive discussion. This event has two primary objectives. First, it aims to provide Japanese students with direct insights from local voices, helping to bridge the gap between Japanese perceptions and the actual situation in the Philippines. We hope this will contribute to future business collaborations and strengthened relations between Japan and the Philippines. Second, we want to inform Japanese students about how ODA and JICA contribute to the Philippines' development. By understanding Japan's role in international cooperation, we also aim to provide an opportunity for people to recognize the significance of Japan's culture and identity.

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)