

JENESYS 2.0 Program Report

Introduction:

I would like to start by thanking the Government of Japan and JICE for the wonderful opportunity provided to me and the rest of the students of SAARC countries to experience the "Land of the Rising Sun".

JENESYS 2.0 is a worthy initiative by the government of Japan for revitalization of Japan. I hope Japan succeeds in its efforts and JENESYS 2.0 turns out to be equally important and exciting for Japan as it is for the students visiting the country. The program lasted one week: from 8th June 2013 to 15th June 2013. Our main destinations for stay were Tokyo and Yokohama.

The program schedule was as follows:

.June 9 : Arrival in Tokyo

.June 10: General Orientation and Group Orientation

.June 11: Visit to Nihon Minkaen (for indigo-dying experience) and Shibaura Water Reclamation Center

.June 12: Visit to Yokohama City Municipal Disaster Prevention Center and Mitsubishi Minatomirai Industrial Museum

.June 13: Visit to Amanuma Elementary School (Cultural Presentation)

.June 14: Workshop Presentation

.June 15: Departure

The experience cannot be expressed in words. Japan is awesome. Way beyond my Imagination. It is well ahead of other countries of the world. Personally I gained a lot from the experience. I had never gone this far in my life and this opportunity was simply overwhelming for me. It broadened my vision and changed the way how I feel about the world. A truly educating experience it was.

Experience Highlights:

Personnel: I would call them the crown jewel of this program. The experience could no way be the same without them. Special thanks to Junko Eto-san and Yoko Teremora-San and all other coordinators for their extraordinary cooperation and care taking. They were the guide for us, helping us out in every way and giving us their complete time to make sure our week goes flawless and unforgettable.

Food: My initial assumptions about the food we would be provided were quite different to the reality. There was no problem in meals at all. Everything regarding our taste and limitations of food was taken care of and whatever we ate was always familiar. This doubled the fun of the experience.

Accommodation: We stayed in hotels for the whole week and the living standard there spoke for itself. Every accommodation was perfect and comfortable. The hotel staff was helping and the stay there was a pleasure. The hotels had the responsibility of our breakfast meals and they did it amazingly well.

Transportation: We traveled throughout the city in a comfortable bus. The timing was punctual and the ride was relaxing and also provided very nice sight-seeing.

Visit sites: Every trip to the site was informative and taught us so much about Japan.

My thoughts on the overall experience:

Jenesys 2.0 was truly once in a lifetime experience. It was not my first trip abroad, but it was my first trip to Japan, and what a wonderful one it turned to be. Although I experienced and observed various aspects of the Japanese culture within one week, I didn't really have much time to learn the language due to the limited time we had in Japan. The short duration is perhaps the only criticism I can figure out about this program. I used to have misconceptions about the way Japanese people live and I realize now how important it is to actually go there in Japan to discover these truths yourself rather than making assumptions based on stories you've read in the media or from your informal social networks. Now I can confidently say something about Japan according to experience. Being the first trip to Japan, it was an overwhelming experience too, and I got so carried away by the magical places and Japanese lifestyles that it seemed almost impossible to keep reminding myself the purpose of this trip. This was undoubtedly the best experience of my life and I will always remain thankful to Japan and the Japanese. I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely express my gratitude to the Government of Japan and the people of Japan for this wonderful creative project. To see how a developed country has blended traditional culture with modern innovative technology was "mind blowing" and gave us a sense of hope that we can accomplish the same in our country Pakistan too. Hopefully the JENSEYS 2.0 Project will continue to promote these kinds of experiences so young people participating in this exchange programme will eventually develop their social consciousness and recognize that the trip is life-changing for them. That is very important because it will encourage them to share and talk about their inspiring experiences in Japan later on which should also contribute to promoting and revitalizing Japan.