

2016 Re-inventing Japan Project (Short-Term)

International Students Summit, Comprehensive International Education Program, RJP Internship

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Studying abroad in Japan was an amazing experience for my career. The primary purpose to participating in this study abroad program was to showcase my research to a broad group of people studying in the same field as me. Additionally, this gave me the opportunity to explore possibilities in Japan that I can find useful the future.



Also, this was an opportunity to share my experiences and knowledge of my region of the amazon in Brazil, and learn from students and professors from different countries. Another significant purpose of my participation in this program was to learn about Japanese culture, lifestyle and how they manage their respect for the environment and, at the same time, have a modern life.



On my first week in Japan I participated to the 16^o International Student Summit on Food, Agriculture and Environment in the New Century held in Tokyo University of Agriculture, where myself and students from so many different countries were doing workshops related to the theme of the conference. Those workshops were very helpful to understand how the projects happen in different perspectives, and also practice our presentations with our section groups before the presentation day.

After couple days of discussions and workshops, the presentations started at the conference, and we could understand very interesting projects that are actually happening around the world developed by undergraduate students. Indeed, it gives us ideas that are developed in other countries but can be applied in our own countries according to the local needs.

Afterward, we participated to the Comprehensive International Education Program (CIEP) at the Tokyo University of Agriculture, which was an incredible experience to see how education can change and help the environment and agriculture systems. On this program we had lectures at the University but we also had a field trip to Aoki Village, in Nagano, where we did some agriculture practices and lectures every day.

At Aoki village we had an open ceremony at the city hall, where the Mayor gave us a little background of the village's history and the agriculture activities they develop there. Then, we were divided in groups and we did different harvesting practices. I went to a very nice farm owned by a small family where they produce rice, mushrooms, charcoal and some fruit.



We participated in harvesting of rice in paddies and most significantly learned that it is sometimes done by hand. It was surprising to us to learn that one small bundle produces approximately one bowl of rice. This changed me prospective on the waste of food. I learned that one grain of rice produces 20 plant sprouts on average in a rice paddy. Also I learned that rice is only harvested once per year, the soil is always very wet, and there is no species rotation it's always rice year over year. The farm that we were on only harvests by hand, all the workers are all part of the family including a significant number of women.



The Internship was a very useful opportunity where we were able to see a natural ecosystem that provides fresh produce to local markets. The Japanese NGO “ERECON” promotes conservation to protect the local environmental systems. We learned that they are working in other areas in Asia. They promote training with local farmers to assist them in best practices with respect to sustainability in farming.



Through this program I was able to gain a better understanding of different projects from other countries and how they are uniquely influenced by their particular environment and circumstance. I learned a great deal about how composting is done in Japan through a hands on activities. As well as the aspects of harvesting mushrooms.

With respect to learning from the presentations of participants from other countries I found it very educational to hear about the importance of seaweed in Malaysian for the feeding of marine life and capturing of CO2.

The Canadian participants were able to provide very interesting and useful information about community urban gardens. They take the opportunity to educate children in Canada on the value of this type of agriculture to understand food security, farming with less chemicals and helping the target audience see the connection between what they see in their local supermarket and how it is grown.

Having had the opportunity to hear a global perspective of the agriculture systems in different countries I expect this will have a significant effect on my career choices moving forward. Having made significant connections with other student researches in my field I will utilizes this valuable resource in my work in the future.



The program was very well done and it is difficult to find opportunities for improvement. Notwithstanding that, it would have been good to have more time for facilitated discussion between the student researchers to explore and exchange ideas on future research projects.

