

2018 Re-inventing Japan Project (Short-term)

International Students Summit, RJP Program

Faculty of Forest Engineering • UFRA
5th Year Washington Vieira

I have always wanted to participate in such international program as the RIJ and when I saw the opportunity of the Tokyo NODAI, I couldn't lose that chance and I tried very hard to get it. When I saw I have been selected, I become very happy for being able to travel to Japan and meet different realities from the entire world in just one place.

Also, I really wanted to have some abroad experience to have the chance of improving my English skills and experience how another universities works, it's been a while I have started English classes, but I have never had the chance of going to another countries before this opportunity.

The program I participated was divided in three parts. The first one was the CIEP week, that occurred both in Chiba and Setagaya-ku; the Re-inventing Japan weekend, in Machida; and finally, the ISS, in Setagaya-ku.

On the first day after we arrived in Japan, We traveled to another city called Chiba, only about 2 hours from the Setagaya-ku Campus, and we stayed there for three days, and we were able to stay in a traditional Japanese hotel, which was such different and interesting. The first day we also have met the Koshiro Farm, but we had some problems because of the weather, it was very rainy. Also, we had a lecture of the introduction of the program from professor Dr. Catelo.

In the second day we had very good weather and we were able to have some farming practice in the Koshiro Farm. It was very interesting and as I am from forest department, it was very new for me the way of planting and also, some practicing of killing weed and preparing the soil. I really appreciated it and what more called my attention, was the preoccupation of the Farmer with the heathy and care about the environment, being an organic farm. And in the end of the day we had another lecture and the introduction of what should we do for the CIEP presentation. We were divided in three groups.

On the last day in Koshiro-farm, we have learned about a root that they grow in the farm and we experienced the taste of the ways it can be marketed, such as powder, snack of as tea. The farmer taught us how they plant and grow it. Back to hotel, we had another lecture and we were able to choose which topic we would like to do our powerpoint presentation: Food; Environment and Agriculture. My group tried to choose food, but the other group also wanted it. The tie breaker was made based on our first placement test made in the lunch of the first day, so we stayed with Agriculture.

Back to Setagaya-ku, the others days were made of Lectures from various professors from Tokyo NODAI during the morning, throughout various themes too like agroecology, biotechnology and economics. But the one I really was interesting and caught my attention the most was the lecture from the professor Taji Teruaki, about his research of selecting and isolating plant genes responsible for giving resistance to abiotic stress. I had this interesting about this lecture because I had a dream of doing the master and doctorate in this research line and work as a geneticist.

During the afternoon, we had to make our group discussion, for the last day we present a powerpoint presentation about the reality in Japan in our own topics. It was very satisfying having this time with all those people and we tried our best to this program. For this program, we had a very beautiful closing ceremony with a beautiful dinner made of traditional sushi food and the certificate granting.

Also, during those days we had the chance of going to some amazing places around the city we were staying, as the open museum of Japan and the Japanese Culture Museum; it was such a great opportunity to learn more how Japan was and learn more about their rich culture.



Figure 1. Farming practicing in Koshiro-farm.



Figure 2. Group of agriculture and the mindmap in the group dynamic.

After we finish the CIEP week, I had the opportunity of participate in a program made by ERECON and Tokyo NODAI. This program occurred only in two days, but it was very satisfying and important to makes us thinking about the importance of consuming healthier products and also, the importance of having the half environment in tune with the agriculture, as a respect for the nature and also it provided a great harmony for people who lives near those regions.

On the first day, we walked to another laboratory in Tokyo NODAI and we had to present ourselves to the ERECON and they showed us, as a lecture, about their amazing social work in some countries in Asia. After that, we went to the Kyodo Station until Yurakucho station for the Tokyo International Forum. We were able to enter to the Organic Lifestyle Expo. and we could meet the different products made of organics. It was such a great experience because I didn't know there were a lot of products like the ones I saw there.

There were products for consuming, to use as beauty products, ice creams, toys, clothes and so on. In the end of the day, we discussed about what we most enjoyed there and it was proposed to us that we should choose a product and try to apply it in some community of our home country on the next day.

The other day, we went to a city called Machida, and there we had another lectures about the work of ERECON in Asia, as providing farm practicing, schooling to the illiterate, because they had problems of learning the techniques sometimes. So, this was a very beautiful work.

In the afternoon, we went to see the Satoyamas, this Japanese word is a applied to the border zone or area between mountain foothills and arable flat land, in other words, the join of the nature and the agriculture. In the end of the day we had to discuss about the product we choose, talk about it and share to other people about the community plan that could use it. I choose a African people origin settlement from my State in Brazil and the plan was to provide them technique to start an organic culture of vegetables to give them some autonomy of their production and space on the market, once the figure of middleman is still very presented on Amazonia area.

We had a great time with ERECON all the Latin-countries shared about their realities. We also received our certificate during the last day.



Figure 3. The Organic Lifestyle Expo.



Figure 4. During the explanation about the product I have choose and the community plan of my home country.

After the ending of the Weekend with ERECON, we started the last program of our Short-program period, the ISS 2018. The first day of the ISS 2018, we had a field trip to a local potato farm, there the farms explained about the place and how it works, how they grow there and the techniques they use in the farm. It was very interesting.

When I was selected, I was supposed to do a poster presentation, but during the program I was invited to enter the session 1.1 and introduce and share about my work on the session conclusion. We discussed a lot and we also could help each other in ours presentations during the first two days of the event.

In the lasts two days, the event began and we have a great speech about the program and then, the presentation of the works begun for the oral and also the posters. The Federal University of Amazonia took place on October 27th. The session conclusion of my group was in the morning, and my poster presentation was in the afternoon.

During the whole discussion of the groups, we also choose the next year Summit theme, which will be “Youth transforming thoughts on Sustainable Agriculture and Resource Management to connect Local and Global Community” for 2019 in Tokyo University of Agriculture again.



Figure 5. The session 1-1.

The short-program was incredible and it made me have some amazing experiences for my academic knowledge, and also for me as a person, after meeting people about many countries and shared cultures and created friendship with many people around the world.

We have the opportunity of talk about the reality of our countries and also to hear the other countries problems, being able to notice that we have common reality even being from the other side of the world and also, share what we are doing to reverse it.

This internship is one of the things that happens in your life that makes you thinking about what you are doing and what you want to do, opening your mind to new things and possibilities in your life and, of course, you learn new things that makes you excited to bring to your home country. As a forest engineering, I must have in mind that I need to manage the forest in a way that it still exists for all future generations. Respecting the nature and giving continuity to human activities in a sustainable way.

Maybe as suggestions for the future and improve the program, I would like to say that we could have more interaction with the Japanese students, and also, some more practices about environmental area and forestry, not only about agriculture.