

Yamaguchi Prefectural University

Activity Name	Interactive Cross-Cultural Education through Local Visits by International Students			
Dates	From July 19, 2009 to January 17, 2010			
Location	Yamaguchi Prefecture			
Participants	International Students	Residents, Corporation	Other	Total
	42	Approx. 600	21	Approx. 650

<Activity Details>

During a seven-month period, from July 2009 to January 2010, we organized overnight exchange programs for residents from five areas in Yamaguchi and international students studying at Yamaguchi Prefectural University. This exchange initiative was launched to foster mutual exchange between international students and local residents. It will help internationalize local regions by facilitating interaction with international students and having those international students introduce their cultures directly to local residents, while providing opportunities for international students to learn about the wonderful aspects of Japanese and regional cultures by having local residents teach their customs and traditions.

Because the areas visited were all far from the university, international students who participated had an opportunity that wouldn't have been available on campus—to learn about culture and traditions and gain many valuable experiences specific to those areas.



Cooking class in Suou Oshima



Heart-warming exchange with Japanese international students from Yamaguchi Prefectural University

The exchange activities went smoothly from beginning to end, even though there were many local residents who had never had any interaction with a foreigner before, and some of the residents indicated that the program had given them the desire to participate in this type of exchange program again in the future. We hope to contribute further not only to supporting international students but also to the internationalization of rural areas.

The age and sex of the local residents, as well as the content of the activities, were all different on each occasion. The time that international students shared with local participants unfailingly became precious to them.

<Comments from The Participants>

I was very happy to be able to interact with people in various areas. I especially enjoyed the wonderful nature of Yamaguchi during my exchange visit to Nishiki Town, thanks to a great deal of cooperation of the local residents. They taught me ippon-jime (ceremonial hand clapping that consists of single clap) and other Japanese traditions at the exchange event. I also discovered the New Year's custom of eating seven herbs. I didn't know that even ordinary grass growing on the roadside could become such a wonderful dish. I'm so glad that the exchange program gave me a chance to learn about various cultures in Japan and visit every corner of Yamaguchi.
(Saeha Kim)



Participating in a summer festival in a nursing home in Atou Town



In front of the welcome sign made by students at Tawarayama Junior High School

It learned so much through close interaction with the local residents, junior high school teachers and students, and my fellow international students from other countries. The Japanese culture that I got to see included a very famous story performed by a rakugo comic storyteller and the traditional performing art of kabuki. The performances were interesting and deepened my understanding of Japanese culture. In addition, being able to participate in activities such as staying at an ordinary house and trying out a hot spring was very meaningful to me. Through these regional exchange activities, I got to see for myself whether I'm going to be able to adapt to Japanese society, and experience in person how residents of rural areas treat foreigners.
(Haiyan Shi)