

JENESYS 2.0—participants' reports

JENESYS 2.0 is a flagship youth exchange program of the Japanese Government. The program continues to evolve, but at its core it is an opportunity for young Australians to visit Japan and learn more about 'Japan-brand', covering everything from the latest high-tech to traditional arts and everywhere from Tokyo to small regional centres. Feedback always seems to say it is the people participants meet that are the best part of the trips.

There have now been several JENESYS 2.0 Festivals which see several hundred high school and university students join their peers from other ASEAN and Oceanian countries as they travel around Japan. Soon after arriving back in Sydney from the latest 10-day Festival (26 May to 3 June), Mrs Bev Steele, Head of LOTE at Kirrawee High School, dropped us a quick note to touch base which read:

[Just] to let you know how the JENESYS 2.0 program in Japan proved to be an invaluable experience for the students and very enjoyable for me as supervisor.

KNT organisation was outstanding, providing a rich variety of activities to introduce and familiarise students with many aspects of traditional and contemporary Japan. Coordinating 360 young people from 13 different countries with such care and kindness, humour and good cheer is an impressive achievement.

The chance to meet and become close friends with students from countries like Laos, Brunei, Timor Leste and many others was amazing for all of us. It is an opportunity that I think all involved will always cherish.

It was also an honour to accompany the representative students from each country on the courtesy call to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where they were very warmly welcomed.

The Australian delegation were praised in Japan for their punctuality, enthusiasm and responsible approach. I was very proud of the group and their positive, cooperative approach throughout the program. Also, at the JENESYS 2.0 Festival we managed to present quite a professional dance item involving all 80 students on stage! We changed the music selection and added a variety of sequences. Somehow on the day we got everyone, including all the boys, in time. We finished with a flourish with hats thrown high into the air to rousing calls of "Coo-eee" and "Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, oi, oi, oi" which brought the audience to their feet.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the program. It was a privilege to be a supervisor of such fine young ambassadors for Australia in Japan.

What is in a name? It sounds like a great program you're thinking, but what's the name all about? JENESYS is said as for 'Genesis'. It stands for 'Japan East-Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths'. JENESYS 2.0 is the current program succeeding JENESYS and KIZUNA.



Ms Liliane Moothoo during her homestay in Shimane Prefecture— one of the highlights for most JENESYS participants.

Ms Liliane Moothoo currently studies Japanese at the University of Sydney and was one of the NSW participants on the same Festival program. She also seemed to have a great time on the program.

I'd like to say that it's been a pleasure to be part of JENESYS 2.0 ... and also it was a pleasure to have the supervisors, Annie and Beverley, along with us.

That week in Japan was unforgettable, and while on this trip, I got to know Japan more deeply.

I was part of the Shimane group. We went to Yoshika (second city in Japan to have the longest living people - over 7,000 people reside there). We did rice planting, had a factory and school visit (Yoshika Senior High School has only 90 students), homestay with a family (their milk tofu and milky ice cream was amazing), got to see the beauty of the countryside, relax at a hot spring and watch a Kagura performance.

The JAO festival was great, as a group of 80 people we pulled off that bush dance really well even though we didn't have much time for practice. And it was lovely to meet people from Japan and the participating nations; everyone was absolutely friendly to one another.

I will really love to return again. And also [I'm] spreading the word about Japan to as many people as possible.

And listening to AKB48's *Koi Suru Fortune Cookie* which was our theme song will always bring back the memories of JENESYS 2.0.

Finally, my current and future goal is to help out with the friendship between Japan and Australia.