



Embrace the Challenge of Seeking Something New

Reina Tanaka

Kochi University

-Third-Year Student



Nippon Maru: Port Call at Kochi New Port

for the Ship for World Youth

Three years ago, I entered university and found myself participating in KOCHI IYEO activities. One of the most memorable experiences was hosting the regional program of the "Ship for World Youth" project, an initiative of the Cabinet Office Youth International Exchange Project, twice.

My encounter with KOCHI IYEO began in my first year of university when a friend invited me to the summer YOUTH FORUM. Honestly, I didn't know what to expect at the FORUM, so I couldn't immediately decide to participate.

However, the friend's words, "You will meet a lot of people there," lingered in my mind, and I eventually decided to join the FORUM.

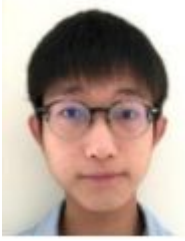
There were two main reasons that pushed me to participate in the FORUM.

First, my sister agreed to join me. For someone like me, who was scared to dive into an unfamiliar place alone, my sister's presence was significant.

Second, I had a strong desire to meet many people. When I entered university, we were still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, with many online classes. There were few opportunities to interact with others, so I had not made many friends. Just starting to live alone, I felt increasingly lonely.

Despite being very shy, my desire to find new friends made me decide to participate in the FORUM. Initially, I was just a general participant, but someone asked if I wanted to help at the reception desk. I accepted and got along well with the staff I happened to work with at the reception. In the FORUM discussion groups, people of different ages gathered, and I could hear ideas from various perspectives. Although I didn't particularly speak well about my own thoughts, I felt a sense of satisfaction by the end of the FORUM.

Participating in the FORUM in my first year of university has shaped who I am today. That decision led me to my next KOCHI IYEO activities, and through various activities, I have been able to connect with people from all over Japan and the world. It doesn't have to be a big challenge, and you don't have to face it alone. I plan to continue seeking and embracing new challenges for myself.



Seeds of Life Change

Masaki Koyama

Kochi University -Third-Year Student

The first time I participated in KOCHI IYEO activities was during the YOUTH FORUM in the winter of my first year at university. I was invited by friends and teachers to join. I wanted to use it as an opportunity to change myself, as I had never taken on new challenges or tried something different until I became a university student. At first, I couldn't get used to the atmosphere and was shy, so I couldn't fulfill my role as a staff member effectively. However, participating brought about a change in me. I started to think, "I want to grow and become like the wonderful and cool people around me."

In the second YOUTH FORUM, I challenged myself to make a presentation with an elementary school teacher. The topic was "Work Style Reform for Teachers." Incorporating the teacher's knowledge and experience into the content, I also provided various opinions on the structure and script, and we practiced online repeatedly. During the actual presentation, we managed to present in front of 130 people. Looking back now, I feel my skills were lacking, but it was the first time in my life I had the opportunity to speak in front of such a large audience, and I felt like I had broken out of my shell.

In August, without taking a break, we began preparing in earnest for the regional practice activities of the "Ship for World Youth" project (Kochi Prefecture Program). The six months from August 2023 to February 2024 were the most fun, hard, and enriching period of my life. We had online and in-person meetings even on weekends, and we repeatedly created materials and held discussions for the regional practice activities. Despite everyone being busy with their own main jobs and struggling with preparation, we encouraged each other and worked hard together, which led to overflowing tears and emotion in the end. I think our relationships deepened because we shared such a challenging time. As one of the leaders responsible for pulling the program forward, I definitely improved my ability to take initiative and consider the whole picture. For the first time, I felt something like a sense of leadership growing within me.

Through KOCHI IYEO activities, I have been able to grow significantly as a person and meet many people I genuinely respect. I feel that these encounters are my greatest treasure. These people are also the ideal figures I aspire to become, and being with them makes me want to strive harder. They have had a profound impact on my life. I have nothing but gratitude for the people I have met so far. Now, I want to become someone who can contribute to someone else's growth and be thanked for it. I want others to have life-changing experiences like I did and become a catalyst for those experiences.

Yes, I can do it, and I will.

-EOD-