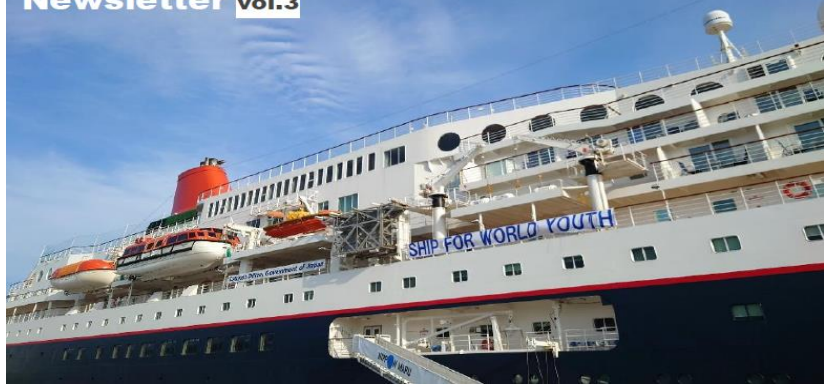




### My Growth Has No Limits

Mayu Hanaoka  
Financial Organization  
Employee

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*"Nippon Maru" at Kochi New Port in 10-17 Feb 20224  
Varieties of local practice activities were held across Kochi Prefecture*

I first participated in the KOCHI IYEO YOUTH FORUM in the summer of my first year at university. I was overwhelmed by my peers who confidently presented on stage and spoke up actively in discussions. I felt frustrated with myself for lacking both confidence and dreams.

Afterwards, I held onto the words I heard at the forum: **"Who you meet, what you learn, and how you act can change your life starting tomorrow."** I decided to take the exam for the Cabinet Office's "Ship for World Youth" program. For several months, I faced it with more determination and earnestness than ever before, but the exam was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic that began spreading in February.

However, to maintain the connections I had made, I continued participating in over 200 online exchange programs and study sessions, and resumed attending in-person forums two years later. Whenever I had an idea for an event, I was given the opportunity to organize it. Before I knew it, I transitioned from being a regular participant to becoming a staff member, from a facilitator to a host, gaining the confidence to speak in public and handle various issues flexibly.

In February 2024, the "Ship for World Youth" local practice activities (Kochi Prefecture Program) suddenly came my way. Despite never having participated in the "Ship for World Youth" program, I was appointed as the Deputy Executive Committee Chairperson for its reception. Over the years, I had transitioned from being the one nurtured to supporting the growth of the youth.



*Seeing off the "Nippon Maru" at Kochi New Port*

Youth development activities are fascinating. Encounters and small events during programs can significantly change the lives of young people. Instead of dismissing even small steps as insignificant, how about taking them with a sense of excitement? I want to continue supporting the first steps of young people. Of course, my growth as a youth is also far from over.



## Make a move, only you can change your life.

Hiroki Nagaoka  
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade  
Kochi University

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*Sunset view from the Nippon Maru*

The moment I decided to change my life was in the spring of my second year at university. The precious time of my first year had been stolen by COVID-19, leaving me struggling and frustrated, thinking, “This can't go on like this, but what should I do?” That's when I encountered the KOCHI IYEO YOUTH FORUM. Initially, I felt inadequate in all areas, such as facilitation and presentation skills, but as I worked hard alongside my KOCHI IYEO peers, sharing joys and sorrows, I started to develop various skills and felt my growth as a person. It was during these activities that I found a new challenge in the form of the Cabinet Office's "Ship for World Youth" (SWY) program.

After interacting with the SWY participants who came to Kochi in February 2023, I was inspired to become like them, a youth representative of Japan. I immediately applied for the FY 2025 "Ship for World Youth" program, passed the exam, underwent pre-training, and finally boarded the "Nippon Maru" as a member of the Japanese youth delegation.

The training with 100 Japanese youth representatives and 140 foreign youth from 14 countries aboard the "Nippon Maru" was like a daily drama. If I were to put this drama into words, it would be **“a series of challenges where ones are constantly questions who they are while feeling refined as a human being through fateful encounters and discussions in a multicultural environment, and extraordinary learning and awareness.”** It is without a doubt that these continuous challenges have shaped who I am today, Nagaoka Hiroki. Anxiety and conflicts are the first steps toward growth, and challenges are what help us envision a better future for ourselves.

**Only you can change your own life.** Many people have guided me to where I am today. For the youth, the YOUTH FORUM is the best place for encounters and learning.

Your first step towards a challenge will change you and create your future.



*With the Youth Delegation*