

LA-CEP Program

Internship Report - Tiago Pereira do Rego

According to the program necessities, students were to participate in an internship program. This internship was in the Chofu City Hall, and we as students were set on a culture exchange and cooperation program together with the City Hall employees.

In the initial day we got to meet the City Hall and its various facilities and see the integration with the local community. We had a meeting to discuss what would be our job during this internship and it was decided that we would introduce the Brazilian culture, as the group was made of Brazilians. But not only that, we would also be learning about Japanese Culture, as culture exchange was the main part of it.

To achieve our objective, we would visit a few "after school children's centers" in the Chofu area, and for this we also had a meeting with the staff responsible for the children's centers to discuss what would be best to introduce as part of our culture and it was decided that we should introduce a bit of our country and it would also be nice to show a comparison regarding both Japanese and Brazilian culture and customs.

Once the content was decided, it was time to produce the necessary material. As per the City Hall employees request, we developed a poster to showcase the Brazilian Culture. Said poster was to be exposed a few days before the after school center for children as to pique their interest and in preparation for our visit and presentation.

After the completion of the posters, we also helped with a city event that enlisted various volunteers. Each one of us took part in different jobs, but cooperated together with other employees and volunteers from all ages and different backgrounds for the welfare of community.

During this event it was possible to see up close what the citizens think of their city and their effort and support to its improvement. It was my first experience with volunteer work in Japan and for a few other participants, their first volunteering experience ever. I think it was a very good experience in general for us and it can contribute a lot to our personal growth.

The following days of the internship were spent visiting the aforementioned after school children's centers. In total of four centers were visited and each of them were a unique experience. The visits usually started with a brief presentation of ourselves and explaining what was to be expected of us during the day.

In the morning we also got time to interact with the kids, in the different rooms of each center. We got not only to play but also learn Japanese games and even sports during these visits, and it seemed like the children were really happy during the process, which felt rewarding at the end of it all.

In the afternoon, we had the allotted time to have our poster presentation, where we talked a bit more in depth of our purpose in coming to Japan to study, a bit more about ourselves, how is life in Brazil, a few customs that are different from Japan, how is our basic diet and so on. We also taught the children a few games that we used to play as kids, and they also presented some traditional Japanese games and toys. To close our exchange we also had drinks and candies from Brazil, so they could have a small taste of it, while they also offered us some of the usual food from Japan. Overall, I think it was a good experience for both parties, as we all enjoyed a bit of another's culture.

What I can take of it is that everything can be a learning experience, I was really happy to take part in these events. All of the staff from the City Hall and from the after school children's center were receptive of us and through our cooperation I believe we were able to achieve our objective in presenting our culture and learning more about Japan, as expected of the internship program.