



# MISSION REPORT 2024

Social Entrepreneurship  
Empowerment Development







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**MESSAGES SHARED  
BY THE GOROM  
ASSOCIATION STAFF**

# MESSAGES SHARED BY THE GOROM ASSOCIATION STAFF



**Goro Mitsuura**

Representative Director  
GOROM Association

I am pleased to inform that the SEED 2024 Program has been successfully completed. Since the starting of the Program in July 2024, students conducted group works at least twice a week, then performed an excellent public pitching presentation in Japan as a highlight of the Study Tour.

Diversity is one of the main features of GOROM Association and the SEED Program. Students are from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Japan with various academic backgrounds. Despite different expertise and cultural backgrounds, students worked very hard and established “One Team, One Goal” spirit. I am confident that this experience contributed a lot for students to established their global career development.

The Program started in 2022 with a strong partnership from Universities of Latin America from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Japan. In addition, we received the continuous support from producers of traditional products in Yamanashi Prefecture. Each year, participating students have achieved significant goals to share the knowledge of Latin American market that is in line with the revitalization of local economy through the concept of Social Entrepreneurship. Because of such continuous successes we have expanded our institutional partnership agreements (MOU) with Rosario University from Colombia, Meiji University and Tsukuba University of Japan, and Nippon Koei that is a leading consulting firm in Japan.



# MESSAGES SHARED BY THE GOROM ASSOCIATION STAFF

During the Study Tour in Japan in December, the students were warmly welcomed by more people than ever before. In Yamanashi, for example, in the textile industry, one of the presentation topics, whereas last time there was only one company, this time the Textile Association hosted the students. In the sake industry, in addition to the Taikan Brewery last time, the students were hosted by Shichiken Brewery, the largest sake brewery in the prefecture. In addition, an exchange meeting was held with the Yamanashi Central Bank, which is the core of the economic development of Yamanashi Prefecture, and the importance of regional development was felt firsthand. Finally, the students were fortunate to have the opportunity to pay a courtesy call on the Governor of Yamanashi Prefecture, where they shared the achievements of the students who are serving as a bridge between Japan and Latin America. In Tokyo, they deepened their intercultural understanding through joint classes with students from Meiji University and University of Tsukuba, and at exchange meetings with JICA and Nippon Koei, they were able to actively exchange opinions with experts about the partnership between Japan and Latin America.

From now on, we will live in a global era. The experience of online group work and study tours will be an irreplaceable memory for the participating students. I am sure that through this experience, they will grow even more and become a bridge between Japan and Latin America in the future.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those involved who provided us with great cooperation in implementing the SEED2024 program.

# MESSAGES SHARED BY THE GOROM ASSOCIATION STAFF



**Leslie Benitez**

Academic Coordinator  
GOROM Association

As the Academic Coordinator for the SEED Program 2024, my role has been both challenging and rewarding. I have had the privilege of working closely with students and faculty from diverse backgrounds, ensuring that the academic objectives of the program were met while also fostering an environment conducive to cultural exchange. Throughout the course of the program, I was responsible for organizing and overseeing the academic sessions, ensuring that all materials were prepared in advance and that the students had the necessary resources to succeed. Additionally, I supported the professors in guiding the students through their coursework and discussions, which provided a rich and diverse learning experience.

The most fulfilling part of my experience was observing the students' growth, both academically and personally, as they navigated different cultural contexts. It was incredibly rewarding to see them engage in thoughtful discussions, participate actively in workshops, and develop innovative solutions for the various challenges presented during the program.

I found that the collaboration between Latin American and Japanese students was a particularly valuable aspect of the program, allowing everyone involved to broaden their perspectives and gain a deeper understanding of each other's cultures.

Moreover, coordinating such a dynamic and international program has sharpened my skills in project management, problem-solving, and communication. Working with a team of professors, local coordinators, and students has strengthened my ability to adapt to diverse situations and respond to challenges in a timely and efficient manner. This experience has deepened my commitment to fostering global collaboration and educational exchange, and I look forward to applying the knowledge and skills gained from this role to future projects.



# MESSAGES SHARED BY THE GOROM ASSOCIATION STAFF



**Alonso Hernandez**

IT Coordinator  
GOROM Association

My experience as a coordinator during the SEED 2024 program was undoubtedly enriching for my career. I feel that I learned much more about Japan, its culture, and society while accompanying and advising participants from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Japan.

During the online sessions with students, teachers, and special guests, I was able to complement what I had learned last year during my participation as a member of one of the program teams. Additionally, I consistently supported logistics for preparing sessions, scheduling, and improving the GOROM Association's web pages. My motivation to maintain a strong connection with Japan made this work—alongside my university semester—much more manageable and enjoyable every second.

The study tour allowed me to get to know all the participants and teachers better and fully understand the business ideas each team prepared to present to the producers in the Yamanashi region. This opportunity to meet people from Latin America and Japan who share my interest in Japanese culture and socially-focused entrepreneurship is incredibly valuable to me, and I am sure these connections will last a lifetime.

# MESSAGES SHARED BY THE GOROM ASSOCIATION STAFF



**Nonoka Tagashira**

Senior Intern  
GOROM Association

SEED 2024 was my third study tour and I had very high expectations. I had always seen how hard they worked in the online sessions, so I was looking forward to seeing what the deliverables would be. I was also looking forward to meeting face-to-face with students I had only seen online for the past six months.

The study tour was not only fun, but also required time management skills and the ability to organize everyone as a staff member. I also had to deal with problems during the tour, which tested my ability to be adaptable and flexible.

In the end, the tour was a success, and I am very grateful for the success of the tour, which was made possible through discussions with other staff members and the cooperation of the participating students. This experience was a chance for me to grow, and I hope it will be a valuable source of future growth for the participating students as well.



# MESSAGES SHARED BY THE GOROM ASSOCIATION STAFF



**Marin Shin**

Senior Intern  
GOROM Association

During my internship, I learned valuable lessons about teamwork, adaptability, and the importance of time management. The study tour was an eye-opening experience that allowed me to apply what I had learned in a real-world setting. It wasn't just about having fun or exploring new places, but about coordinating and organizing the team efficiently. As a staff member, I had to take on responsibility and ensure that everything ran smoothly, which involved balancing multiple tasks and solving problems as they arose.

I realized how important it is to stay flexible and calm in unexpected situations, as challenges were bound to occur. Through these situations, I gained confidence in my problem-solving skills and learned how to adjust to the needs of others. The success of the tour was not just a result of my individual efforts, but also of the collaboration and communication within the team. It showed me the power of working together toward a common goal, and how each member's contributions are integral to the overall success.

Additionally, meeting the students face-to-face after months of online interaction was a meaningful experience. It made me appreciate the value of personal connections and the importance of fostering a sense of community, even in virtual settings. This internship has not only helped me grow professionally but also personally, as I developed skills that will benefit me in future endeavors. I hope that the students who participated in the tour also found it to be a valuable learning experience and that they, too, will continue to grow as individuals.

# **MESSAGES FROM PROFESSORS OF PARTNER UNIVERSITIES**

# MESSAGES FROM PROFESSORS OF PARTNER UNIVERSITIES



**Juan Carlos Díaz Vásquez**

EAFIT University, Colombia

2024 marks the third year of my participation in the SEED Program. This time I can testify how the different activities visits, and cooperated work have deepened between Latin American and Japanese universities and institutions. I am honored to accompany the students from EAFIT university in Colombia and keep on working as executive advisor for GOROM Association.

The first week in Japan we had the chance to meet with local authorities and especially the Yamanashi Prefecture Governor. Who took the time to receive us and to have a moment with these group of students eager to discover Yamanashi Prefecture. By the end of the week, on Friday students delivered their final presentation, as result of previous online work tackling social, economic and entrepreneur issues, in a bilingual way, in English and in Japanese so the local audience could understand what is being said by these Latin American young students. The reactions were clearly emotional and engaged.

The local community showed gratitude to these visitors from the other side of the world. On Saturday GOROM Association offered a wonderful gift to all of us by dedicating the whole day to visit the Mount Fuji, one of the most important symbols of the Japanese people, recognized all over the world, and the sacred place that is called to be the birthplace of Japan.

The second, and final week started in Tokyo which is a different kind of scenery Tokyo the frenetic city that never stops. The city with almost 20 million inhabitants and is the most crowded urban area in the world. A highly organized behavior shown by Tokyo habitants allows them to use the metro lines to reach practically all corners in the city. This is an intense experience, since we come from different cities, some of them more crowded such as Sao Pablo, Buenos Aires or Bogotá.

# MESSAGES FROM PROFESSORS OF PARTNER UNIVERSITIES

This week was full of visits at the highest levels such as the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). International diplomacy is also part of this program, so each group of students by country visited their embassies here in Japan offering us a moment of meeting with our fellow countrymen, as well learning how these institutions promote bilateral cooperation. Very important cooperation institutions were also visited this week, such as JICA, the agency developing programs in developing countries bringing welfare to marginalized sectors. We also visited Nippon Koei, which is the engineering consultancy agency in Japan in charge of developing infrastructure projects such as drains, bridges, and other projects bringing drinkable water in many Latin American countries.

The work with the global Japanese students at Meiji University has been evolving during these three years. This time around, we sent previously student's videos with the social entrepreneurship projects they presented in Yamanashi, for Meiji students to have a better view on the aspects that are covered by the SEED program. At the same time, we discussed about politics social issues economic issues affecting the Japanese society nowadays, as well as the Latin American societies. This meeting was carefully prepared by the global Japanese students at Meiji University developing interesting posters with information about Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina showing that the knowledge on those regions is accurate and updated.

As conclusion of this third time with the SEED Program I want to acknowledge the progress we've been making expanding the number of universities participating. This year there is a new university from Bogota, which is Rosario university. This is showing the good name of the SEED Program. Finally, I would like to describe the unique and magnificent experience this is due to the efforts of the GOROM Association staff.

# MESSAGES FROM PROFESSORS OF PARTNER UNIVERSITIES



**Victor Dias Grinberg**

FAAP, Brazil

Flying across the world to engage in a multicultural experience is both a unique and scary opportunity, and I could not imagine doing this in a different scope than the SEED Program. As we entered our third year participating, I was privileged to be leading the group of FAAP students to engage in experiential learning of social entrepreneurship, development and innovation through hard research, observation and feedback-based discussions.

As far as the academic part goes, boosting curricular content by fostering partnerships between Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Japan strengthens the results and create a much more interesting vision that ables the final pitch from the groups to be so creative, resourceful and useful for local producers of Textile, Wine, Sake and Jewelry in the Yamanashi prefecture.

As far as the on-site learning goes, going on courtesy visits, having meaningful cultural immersions into the Japanese history and developing social and soft skills creates a beautiful path so that impacts both personally and professionally our students for many years, as both this experience and the profound changes it can generate keeps fostering internal development.

To do a brief recall, during the first six days of the study tour, the students visited the Yamanashi district, where they had the opportunity to meet local companies that would receive consulting services. The group interacted with company managers, as well as spoke with stakeholders from the region, such as Yamanashi Chuo Bank and local authorities, including Governor Kotaro Nagasaki and Vice Governor Kō Osada. During the conversations, the economic, social and cultural impacts of the industries were discussed.

# MESSAGES FROM PROFESSORS OF PARTNER UNIVERSITIES

The FAAP delegation also had the opportunity to participate in a ceremony with local authorities, when they presented a gift symbolizing the collaboration between the two countries: a souvenir inspired by the stained-glass windows of the Museum de Arte Brasileira (MAB FAAP). A great little nod to textiles and art, that are crucial to this experience.

A highlight was that on Friday the 6th, with coverage on local television, the groups presented their proposals, hoping to create a prosperous path for the future of our local hosts. At the end of the week, participants took the opportunity to explore the Mount Fuji region and the city of Tokyo, absorbing more of the rich local culture.

The schedule for the remaining days in Tokyo included meetings with academic and corporate partners, as well as a visit to the Embassies. At both Meiji and Tsukuba University, students got to exchange views and experiences between Japan and LATAM; at MOFA, METI and JICA they paraded their hard work, networked and got strategic insight into future opportunities. Additionally, thinking about global issues, visits to the Sugunami Incineration Plant and the Disaster Prevention Experience Learning Facility gave a hands-on experience that will foster lessons in our communities.

Very excited for what SEED and the GOROM Association have for next year.



# MESSAGES FROM PROFESSORS OF PARTNER UNIVERSITIES



**Luis Ignacio Argüero**

Universidad Austral, Argentina

This was my first time participating in the SEED program, representing Universidad Austral from Argentina. It was a unique experience from the beginning: students had to communicate, negotiate and work together online on a proposal, coming from different countries and time zones. Once arrived in Japan, they had a very busy week meeting the producers, visiting their places of work, and adapting the strategies that they had developed with the new knowledge that they acquired through this in-person contacts.

Students had to face many challenges, first and mostly having to present to business owners in 20 minutes on a strategy to enter the Latin American markets, having limited experience on the sector and on the companies. Nevertheless, they excelled at producing comprehensive proposals that attracted the producers' attention and reflected their collaborative work.

The world is more connected than ever. Young people will experience globalization in a more intense way than the previous generations, and to thrive in this context professionals will have to acquire a lot of intercultural communication skills. Having lived the SEED program first-hand, I am sure that the experience the students lived will contribute to their future career development.

# MESSAGES FROM PROFESSORS OF PARTNER UNIVERSITIES



**Monica Baron**

Universidad del Rosario, Colombia

As my first experience in Japan and representing Rosario University, I couldn't be more grateful to have been part of the SEED Program 2024. From the very beginning, during our Zoom sessions, I could sense the high level of discussions and problem-solving mindsets from all participants. A first clue of what was to come.

After months of preparation, research, and collaboration, the moment finally arrived: we were heading to Japan. While I anticipated an immersive experience, I wasn't fully prepared for the transformative impact of engaging with traditional Japanese producers. Our first week in Yamanashi served as a powerful platform for experiential learning, offering our students a rare opportunity to work closely with local communities and co-create solutions for real-world challenges. This was social entrepreneurship in its truest form. Students quickly realized that their initial solutions needed to be revisited, considering the problems through the lens of the community itself. As their professor, I was proud to guide them through this dynamic process, where they not only studied entrepreneurship but also developed essential skills for cross-cultural collaboration.

By the end of the week, our students were prepared to present their solutions to an audience eager to learn what Latin American perspectives could bring to the table. In the second week, we broadened our horizons further with visits to the Colombian Embassy, MOFA, METI, and JICA, deepening our understanding of the opportunities that can be created from programs like SEED.

# MESSAGES FROM PROFESSORS OF PARTNER UNIVERSITIES

Joint classes with Tsukuba and Meiji Universities allowed for rich discussions about societal differences and collaborative approaches to addressing them, step by step. These experiences gave our students a deeper awareness of the privilege they often take for granted and the responsibility they now carry as SEED alumni.

It was truly inspiring to witness students from Japan, Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia working together towards a common goal, creating meaningful and impactful solutions.

Rosario University is honored to have participated in the SEED Program for the first time, thanks to the invaluable opportunity provided by the GOROM Association.

# MESSAGES FROM PROFESSORS OF PARTNER UNIVERSITIES



**Marcelo Zorovich**

ESPM, Brazil

The program provided a vast experience related to social, cultural and economic issues, including different sectors of Japan, particularly in Yamanashi and Tokyo, while it also helped integrate strategic specificities of social entrepreneurship, embedded in international business and corporate diplomacy.

As such, students were exposed to a variety of audiences and stakeholders, including diplomats, trade experts, professors and students from many countries, producers with distinct backgrounds, among others. Moreover, during the last six months, they had to analyze market variables, allowing them to put in practice what they have been studying in their respective fields or learn something new.

Furthermore, the program enabled the development of numerous skills. I would highlight some of them, such as teamwork, multicultural management, communication in different languages, non-violent communication, negotiation, empathy and resilience, predominantly linked to differences between cultural subtleties and sectoral differences.

# MESSAGES FROM PROFESSORS OF PARTNER UNIVERSITIES



**Ricardo Peña**

Universidad de los Andes, Colombia

The seed of a Japanese cherry blossom is small, yet within it lies the potential to grow into a majestic, strong, and beautiful tree. The seed is willing to share its knowledge to enable the flourishing of life. However, the seed also needs to receive water, nutrients, and care from its surrounding environment.

The SEED program is a metaphor for this flourishing process. Students from four countries—Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Japan—and top universities are eager to share the knowledge they have acquired to support the strengthening of the productive systems in Yamanashi Prefecture, Japan. Like that seed, these students are young, but they are filled with vitality, energy, and a desire to contribute to the growth and sustainability of our world. However, they are not alone in this journey. Their ideas are nurtured by working in multicultural and multidisciplinary teams, where students come together to listen, analyze, discuss, and propose solutions to the specific challenges faced by small producers of textiles, jewelry, sake, and wine in Japan. Throughout the program, they also receive valuable input from mentors.

The outcome of the program is a series of proposals developed by each team, which aim to highlight the history, processes, and traditions of Japanese producers. These proposals are designed to increase tourism to the Yamanashi region and expand business opportunities for local producers.

The SEED program also seeks to enhance leadership skills in Latin American students. During the study tour, students engage in academic, diplomatic, and business meetings that allow them to broaden their understanding of their role in current geopolitical contexts

# MESSAGES FROM PROFESSORS OF PARTNER UNIVERSITIES.

They expand their cross-cultural understanding through discussions on cultural and sociopolitical issues with students from Meiji and Tsukuba Universities. Additionally, they receive valuable feedback on their projects from innovation consultants at Nippon Koei. Students discuss global issues with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry. They also gain insights into urban planning and development through visits to waste disposal plants and disaster prevention centers.

The meeting of cultures and expertise facilitated by the SEED program provides a unique opportunity to explore new perspectives on global affairs and create meaningful synergies between countries, political and academic institutions, showcasing the transformative power of international collaboration.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the producers, mentors, and especially the Gorom Association for making this unique experience possible. The SEED program is an invitation to value our cultural richness and build strong bridges between our societies through social innovation. SEED program participants will become leaders whose ideas hold the potential to make a significant impact in social and economic spheres.



**TEAM PRESENTATIONS  
AND MESSAGES SHARED  
BY THE LEADERS OF  
EACH TEAM**

# SAKE TEAM



**(Team Leader)**  
**Ana Sofia Herazo**

EAFIT University, Colombia



**Eduardo  
Carvalho**

ESPM College, Brazil



**Ana Carolina  
Rondino**

FAAP, Brazil



**Tomomi  
Suzuki**

Meiji University, Japan



**Matias  
Mogetta**

Austral University,  
Argentina



**Santiago  
Sinisterra Arias**

Los Andes University,  
Colombia



**Jose David  
Vargas**

Universidad del Rosario,  
Colombia

# MESSAGES SHARED BY THE LEADERS OF EACH TEAM



## Sake Team Leader

Ana Sofia Herazo  
EAFIT University, Colombia

During my time in the SEED program, I had the pleasure of being the leader of the sake team and working with the Taikan and Shichiken breweries to develop new labels for their bottles and a market entry and a marketing strategy.

While the work was challenging, every piece of it was worth it! All the research my team and I conducted and the presentations we prepared in the online meetings were crucial for our mutual understanding during the study tour. Then, meeting my colleagues in Japan for the first time and learning about their cultures by spending time with them was very inspiring. We created a bond that will last for many years to come. After a lot of preparation and bonding, along with my outstanding team, we presented this proposal to the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry as well as relevant stakeholders in Kofu.

As a team leader, I will always be immensely proud of being able to connect with these communities through amazing students and teachers such as the ones in the SEED program.

# WINE TEAM



**(Team Leader)**  
**Gabriel Ramires**  
FAAP, Brazil



**Sharon Nicole  
Rojas Herrera**  
EAFIT University, Colombia



**Henrique Kahee  
Tsumura**  
ESPM College, Brazil



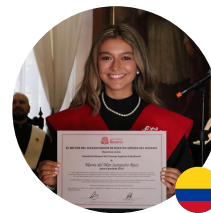
**Eri Suzuki**  
Tokyo University of  
Foreign Language,  
Japan



**Maria Alejandra  
Jimenez**  
Los Andes University,  
Colombia



**Lourdes Josefina  
Pontiroli**  
Austral University, Argentina



**Maria del Mar  
Sampedro**  
Universidad del Rosario,  
Colombia

# MESSAGES SHARED BY THE LEADERS OF EACH TEAM



## Wine Team Leader

Gabriel Ramires  
ESPM, Brazil

Reflecting on the SEED program, my team and I had the privilege of working on a project for Shirayuri Winery. Since July, our group—comprising students from Japan, Argentina, Brazil, and Colombia—has been analyzing the Latin American markets, identifying strategic opportunities while addressing challenges such as export logistics and digital presence. This experience also allowed us to delve into Shirayuri's rich heritage and its renowned Koshu grape wines, highlighting the importance of storytelling in enhancing its brand identity.

During the in-field trip to Japan, we were warmly welcomed by the Uchida Family of Shirayuri and had the opportunity to visit the Marufuji and Katsunuma Jyozo wineries in Yamanashi. Their hospitality provided invaluable insights into their facilities, goals, and the broader Japanese wine culture, enriching our understanding of the winery's potential.

To align with the program's focus on social entrepreneurship, we participated in seminars and visited banks, companies, embassies, ministries, and local political offices, as well as attending joint classes at two universities. These activities offered us a comprehensive perspective on Japan's business landscape and societal frameworks.

On a personal note, the Gorom Association provided me with a unique chance to immerse myself in Japanese culture and form meaningful connections. I am deeply grateful for this challenging yet rewarding experience, which has left me inspired and motivated. I return to Brazil with new knowledge to share, fresh perspectives, and cherished friendships that I will carry with me into the future.

# TEXTILE TEAM



**(Team Leader)**  
**Valentino Di Capua**

Austral University,  
Argentina



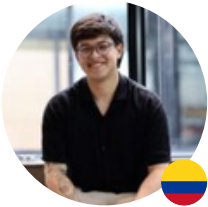
**Henri Yuji  
Tahara**

ESPM College, Brazil



**Paula Alejandra  
Avila Castañeda**

Los Andes University,  
Colombia



**Juan Manuel  
Silva**

Universidad del Rosario,  
Colombia



**Hinano Matsui**

Meiji University, Japan



**Manuela Rios**

FAAP, Brazil



**Samuel Villa**

EAFIT University,  
Colombia



# MESSAGES SHARED BY THE LEADERS OF EACH TEAM



## Textile Team Leader

Valentino Di Capua  
Universidad Austral, Argentina

The SEED program was not just an incredible opportunity, it was the realization of a long-held dream to immerse myself in Japan's culture and society. From a young age, I've been captivated by Japan's rich history, innovation, and unique way of addressing challenges. I've always believed that understanding the inner workings of a society like Japan's could provide valuable insights not just for my personal growth but also for tackling the complex issues faced by Latin America.

Being chosen as the team leader for the textile group was both an honor and a deeply enriching challenge. Over several months, I worked together with a talented team of students from diverse cultural and academic backgrounds to support the Fujiyoshida Textile Association in Yamanashi. Together, we overcame time constraints, language barriers, and cultural differences as we conducted extensive research, collaborated online across time zones, and eventually traveled to Japan to meet local producers and present our findings. These experiences not only sharpened my leadership and communication skills but also brought out the best in every team member, helping each of us grow both personally and professionally. The recognition our work received, including coverage by NHK, was a testament to the collective effort and dedication of the entire team.

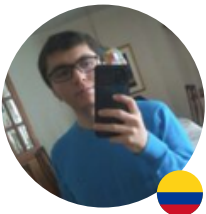
The program offered countless opportunities to connect with remarkable individuals, from local producers to ministry officials, while building a network of like-minded peers and mentors. Learning from Japan's work culture, ecological innovations, and entrepreneurial spirit inspired new perspectives and opened exciting paths for personal and professional development. The SEED program not only empowered me to grow as a leader but also paved the way for me and my team to envision bold futures as professionals and social entrepreneurs.

# JEWELRY TEAM



**(Team Leader)**  
**Lucia Bocalandro**

Austral University,  
Argentina



**Nicolas Rincon Sanchez**

Los Andes University,  
Colombia



**Enzo Kawazoe**

Yokohama National  
University, Japan



**Renata Pertusi**

FAAP, Brazil



**Juan Rodríguez**

Universidad del Rosario,  
Colombia



**Marina Melo Pecci**

ESPM College, Brazil



**Estefania Moreno Bermudez**

EAFIT University,  
Colombia

# MESSAGES SHARED BY THE LEADERS OF EACH TEAM



## Jewelry Team Leader

Lucia Bocalandro  
Universidad Austral, Argentina

Leading the Jewelry team was an honor for me. The opportunity to guide a diverse group of students from different nationalities and academic backgrounds presented both unique learnings and challenges.

We worked with To Labo, a Japanese jewelry store from Kofu. We were asked to help them preserve and promote their traditional jewelry craftsmanship, a heritage at risk of fading away. This project demanded innovative solutions and a deep understanding of the cultural significance of the Kofu Crystal technique.

My experience as the Team Leader reinforced my belief in the power of multidisciplinary teams. By bringing together people with diverse backgrounds and skillsets, I believe we can generate better solutions for a better world.

**MESSAGES FROM  
PROFESSORS AT  
JAPANESE UNIVERSITIES**

# MESSAGES FROM PROFESSORS AT JAPANESE UNIVERSITIES



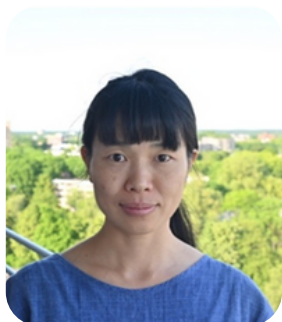
Prof. KENJI SUZUKI

Dean of School of International Studies  
Meiji University, Japan

As a Dean of School of International of Meiji University, I was pleased to mention the significant development of human resource capacity of students. On December 12, we welcomed SEED students and Professors at our Nakano campus for the joint class followed by a cultural event. These events are conducted in line with the MOU that was signed between Gorom Association and Meiji University.

The joint class in Japan was performed as a closing session of my on-line class starting in October. Both Latin American and Japanese students were actively communicating and exchanging the ideas and opinions of various topics with each other to deepen the cross-cultural understanding. I am very convinced that the event contributed to the human capacity of students to act as active players in the global business environment.

# MESSAGES FROM PROFESSORS AT JAPANESE UNIVERSITIES



**Prof. NATSUHO FUJISAWA**

Assistant Professor  
Tsukuba University, Japan

It was my pleasure to welcome six professors and twenty-four Latin American students, along with fellows from the Gorom association, to my lecture titled 'Society and Environment in Latin America.' The classroom, which comprised around fifty Japanese students, was divided into twelve groups, each of which selected a topic for discussion and prepared materials regarding environmental issues in Japan to present. The topics that students discussed covered a wide range, including garbage disposal, deforestation in Japan and Latin America, electric vehicles, culture exchange, and more.

I could see that this face-to-face conversation really influenced students much more than just listening to lectures and discussing issues with Japanese fellows. Many students told me in the post-event survey that they were impressed by Latam students who consider environmental issues as their own problems and became more interested in issues in Japan as well as Latam region.

I believe the event helped students step forward to a deep understanding of global issues.

# **SEED 2024 STUDY TOUR ACTIVITY REPORT**



# DAY 1: DECEMBER 1ST

Welcome to SEED 2024 participants and professors.

On the first day of the Study Tour, all professors and participants, who had been arriving in Japan in the days prior, gathered and met in person for the first time.

Afterwards, a bus journey from Tokyo to Kofu City in Yamanashi Prefecture began. Upon arrival in Yamanashi, the group checked in at the hotel, and then the entire SEED 2024 team enjoyed a guided tour of the city center.



## DAY 2: DECEMBER 2ND

### Opening Ceremony

The second day of the SEED Program Study Tour began with the much-anticipated opening ceremony, which officially launched the program's activities. Held in a welcoming atmosphere, the ceremony started with an address from the organizers, who set a positive and inclusive tone for the days ahead. Following this, professors representing each of the partner universities delivered brief speeches. Their messages highlighted the significance of the program's collaborative efforts, underscoring the importance of curiosity, innovation, and dedication as the foundations for success.

The professors' speeches also emphasized the broader impact of social entrepreneurship, focusing on how the program would foster personal and professional growth, as well as positively influencing the communities we engage with. The importance of cross-cultural cooperation was a recurring theme, reinforcing the idea that this program is not only about academic learning but also about creating meaningful change in the world.

The ceremony included a presentation that outlined the full program agenda, giving participants a clear understanding of the exciting activities planned in the days ahead. This session also highlighted the key goals of the program: to encourage entrepreneurial thinking, problem-solving skills, and the application of sustainable development practices.



## DAY 2: DECEMBER 2ND

The ceremony concluded with a cultural presentation led by Gorom Association interns, who introduced the Japanese tradition of business card exchange. This hands-on demonstration provided valuable insights into Japanese etiquette, which would be essential for the upcoming professional engagements. The event ended with a group photo, symbolizing the unity and excitement of all participants, eager to embark on the journey ahead.



## DAY 2: DECEMBER 2ND

### Wine Team Visit to Shirayuri Winery

After the opening ceremony, the Wine Team traveled to the renowned Shirayuri Winery in Yamanashi Prefecture. Yamanashi is famed for its long history of winemaking, particularly its cultivation of the Koshu grape, which is integral to the region's wine production. The team was given a comprehensive tour of the winery's vineyards, where they learned about the cultivation process and the unique characteristics of the Koshu grape, which thrives in the local climate and soil conditions.

The team also visited the Wine Museum, where they explored the rich history of winemaking in Japan, particularly during the Meiji era. The museum provided fascinating insights into the evolution of winemaking techniques, many of which are still used today. The team was particularly intrigued by the historical significance of the wine industry in Japan, which dates back to the late 19th century.





## DAY 2: DECEMBER 2ND

Following the museum tour, the team participated in a wine tasting session, where they sampled a variety of Shirayuri wines. Among the selections, the dessert wine stood out, praised for its lower alcohol content and rich, complex flavors. Uchida Keiya, the owner of the winery, served as a gracious host throughout the visit, providing in-depth explanations of the wine production process and his personal experiences in the industry. He also shared his future aspirations for Shirayuri Winery, which include expanding its reach to international markets, particularly Latin America.

The visit not only deepened the team's understanding of Japanese wine culture but also sparked discussions on how Shirayuri Winery could develop tailored marketing strategies for Latin American markets, taking into account the unique wine preferences in countries like Brazil, Argentina, and Colombia.



## DAY 2: DECEMBER 2ND

### Jewelry Team Visit to To Labo

The Jewelry Team's visit took them to the To Labo shop in Yamanashi, where they had the opportunity to meet Mr. Ohyori, the founder and owner of To Labo. The team was given a detailed tour of the workshop, where Mr. Ohyori explained the origins of his family's jewelry-making tradition and the unique techniques used in the creation of their pieces. To Labo is known for its focus on traditional Japanese jewelry, especially pieces with religious and symbolic significance, and Mr. Ohyori shared the challenges the brand faces in adapting to modern market demands while maintaining its cultural heritage.

One of the most enlightening parts of the visit was Mr. Ohyori's discussion on the importance of sharing his craft with the world. He spoke about his experiences teaching jewelry-making workshops in Zambia and his ongoing internship program, where he mentors one student at a time for ten years, passing on his knowledge and skills. The team was inspired by Mr. Ohyori's dedication to preserving traditional techniques while making them accessible to future generations of jewelers globally.



## DAY 2: DECEMBER 2ND

The team also had the chance to meet with three emerging jewelers from Yamanashi, who presented their work and discussed the current trends in the jewelry industry. During this discussion, the team explored how To Labo could expand its brand into Latin American markets, focusing on how cultural exchange and cross-border collaborations could drive new opportunities for Japanese jewelry.

To deepen their understanding of the craft, the Jewelry Team had a hands-on experience in the workshop, where each participant polished a gem under the guidance of Mr. Ohyori. This activity provided a firsthand appreciation of the intricate and time-consuming process of jewelry-making, further emphasizing the skill and precision required to master such techniques. The experience left the team with a deeper respect for the craft and the challenges faced by artisans in the jewelry industry.



## DAY 2: DECEMBER 2ND

### Textile Team Visit to Fujiyoshida

The Textile Team's day began with a visit to the Fujiyoshida Textile Association, where they were introduced to the region's long-standing textile tradition. The association's history dates back over a thousand years, with textiles playing a significant role in the local economy, particularly as a substitute for taxes during the Edo period due to the abundance of raw materials in the area.

The team learned about the relationship between textiles and Mount Fuji, with the mountain serving as both a source of inspiration and a central element in the production process. The team also gained insights into the impact of historical events, such as the US-Japan conflict, which led to the shutdown of 40% of the textile production machinery in the region. Despite such challenges, the region's textile industry has persevered, with cooperation projects, like those with Tokyo Zokei University, helping to bring younger generations into the field.





## DAY 2: DECEMBER 2ND

One of the key topics discussed was the dominance of the OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) model in the region, which accounts for around 80% of textile production. The team learned that this model, while lucrative, has limited the recognition of local textile brands. Nevertheless, the association is working to improve the visibility and branding of its products, especially in collaboration with luxury brands like Burberry.

The team also visited the Hikari Orimono factory, which specializes in traditional Japanese brocade, and observed the intricate weaving process. The factory produces textiles used for various products, particularly those associated with traditional Japanese ceremonies and celebrations. The visit highlighted the balance between maintaining traditional techniques and adapting to the demands of modern markets. The team was impressed by Hikari Orimono's efforts to expand its brand into everyday products, such as business card cases and tote bags made from their unique fabrics



## DAY 3: DECEMBER 3RD

### Wine Team Visit to Marufuji Winery

The Wine Team began their third day by visiting Marufuji Winery, a historic and esteemed winery in Yamanashi Prefecture. The team participated in a comprehensive Q&A session with Mr. Uchida Keiya, the owner of Shirayuri Winery, followed by a wine tasting session. During this session, the team sampled five different wines while discussing strategies for exporting these wines to the Latin American market. The conversation focused on various factors, including pricing, distribution, and overcoming potential trade barriers in the region.

After the tasting, the team visited Marufuji Winery, where they observed the entire winemaking process from grape harvesting to pulp and seed separation. The highlight of the tour was the opportunity to explore the underground cellars, where the wine undergoes long-term maturation. This provided a deeper understanding of the meticulous care and patience involved in producing high-quality wines.



## DAY 3: DECEMBER 3RD

Later, the Uchida family hosted the team for a traditional Japanese meal, featuring ramen and gyozas, which was enjoyed in a tatami setting. The meal not only provided a taste of Japanese culinary traditions but also offered a chance to engage in informal discussions about the challenges and opportunities in the global wine industry.

In the afternoon, the team continued their discussions with Mr. Uchida Takao, who shared insights on Shirayuri Winery's export needs. Mr. Uchida highlighted the benefits of partnering with an experienced Japanese exporter to ease the entry process into the Latin American market. The day concluded with a visit to Katsunuma Jyozo Winery, where the team sampled wines at sunset. The collaboration and networking among the wineries underscored the importance of partnerships in driving continuous improvement and excellence in local wine production.



## DAY 3: DECEMBER 3RD

### Textile Team Visit to Fujiyoshida

The Textile Team's visit to Fujiyoshida began with a visit to HADACHU, a local textile company led by Mr. Hada. The team was introduced to the fascinating world of silk production, learning about the composition of silk and the use of its subproduct, sericin, in the cosmetics industry. One of the most striking facts presented was that a single silkworm cocoon produces approximately one kilometer of thread. The team was impressed by the versatility of silk, which is a highly sought-after material due to its warmth, sweat absorbency, unique shine, and thermal regulating properties. The visit also highlighted the challenges faced by the silk industry in Buddhist countries, where silkworms are not harmed due to religious beliefs.

The team learned that silk products are more exclusive and expensive compared to polyester alternatives, which are easier to produce and more affordable. Polyester is commonly used in school uniforms due to its wrinkle-resistant nature. Mr. Hada explained that his factory produces roughly four silk ties per hour, depending on the complexity of the fabric. The team also visited the HADACHU showroom, where they discovered how Mr. Hada's passion for cars influences his creative designs and business operations.





## DAY 3: DECEMBER 3RD

The second stop was at the TENJIN-FACTORY, where the team explored the production of linen cloth derived from flax plants. The team learned that flax was historically produced in Hokkaido for military uniforms and other fabric needs. Linen, known for its high density compared to cotton and its ease of drying, has become a highly sustainable and organic fabric. The team was impressed by the factory's commitment to minimal chemical modification in the production process, emphasizing the natural qualities of the fabric. TENJIN-FACTORY staff discussed the potential for expanding their linen products into the Latin American market, and the team engaged in thoughtful discussions about how such products might be received in the region.

The day concluded with a visit to the Osakabe factory, which specializes in the production of inner linings for suits. The team was shown advanced machinery and learned about the unique properties of Cuprammonium rayon, a special fiber made using copper and processed through a chemical method. Despite the factory's lack of connections for launching its own brand, the team was inspired by the company's efforts to promote its products and develop a clear mission and vision for future growth.



## DAY 3: DECEMBER 3RD

### Sake Team Visit to Taikan Shuzo Brewery

The Sake Team spent the day at Taikan Shuzo, a sake brewery renowned for its traditional methods of sake production. Mr. Osawa, the owner of the brewery, personally guided the team through the sake-making process, which began with the retrieval of steamed rice, a key ingredient in sake production. Each team member had the opportunity to taste the rice and participate in the hands-on process of carrying the rice bags, making them feel closely connected to the craft.

The team learned about the critical role of koji production, where rice is inoculated with *Aspergillus oryzae* mold to break down starches into sugars. These sugars are later fermented by yeast to produce alcohol, the essential component of sake. The team explored the massive sake containers, some capable of holding up to two tons of sake, and even had the opportunity to sample sake directly from these containers.

The visit also provided an opportunity to learn about the various types of sake produced at Taikan Shuzo. The team was shown the storage area, where numerous bottles of sake were carefully stored, and was offered compressed rice remnants containing about 5% alcohol, which they were able to taste. Mr. Osawa's insights into the sake-making process helped the team refine their project and develop a deeper understanding of the challenges and innovations within the sake industry.

The day concluded with a sake tasting, where the team sampled four distinct varieties of sake. The tasting included fruity varieties with lower alcohol content, as well as more robust options like junmai ginjo and daiginjo, which had alcohol concentrations of 18% and 17%, respectively. This hands-on experience enriched the team's knowledge of sake and its potential for export to global markets.



## DAY 4: DECEMBER 4TH

### Jewelry Team Visit to Yamanashi Jewelry Museum

On the fourth day of the SEED program, the Jewelry Team visited the Yamanashi Jewelry Museum, an essential destination for understanding the region's deep connection with the jewelry industry. The museum's guided tour offered an insightful historical overview, explaining the evolution of crystal mining in Yamanashi and its transformation into a hub for gemstone handicrafts. Students were introduced to the cultural significance of crystals and gems in the region, particularly in Kofu city, which is often referred to as the "Jewelry City" due to its rich tradition in jewelry craftsmanship.

The technical side of the visit was equally enriching. Students observed raw gemstones, such as aquamarine, topaz, and amethyst, before they were processed into fine jewelry. The process of gem carving, splitting, cutting, rough shaping, wood grinding, and polishing was explained in detail. These stages demonstrated the skill and dedication required to produce each piece, underscoring the precision and artistry involved in the craft.



## DAY 4: DECEMBER 4TH

One of the highlights of the visit was the opportunity to meet a seasoned artisan, now over 80 years old, who continues to perfect his craft. The students were able to witness firsthand the dedication and passion that artisans bring to their work. This experience allowed them to immerse themselves in the philosophy of jewelry-making, particularly the delicate balance between economic development and environmental preservation that defines the Yamanashi jewelry industry.





## DAY 4: DECEMBER 4TH

### Sake Team Visit to Shichiken Brewery

The Sake Team began their day with an early train ride to Nagasaka, where they visited the historic Shichiken Brewery. Known for its deep roots in Japanese sake craftsmanship, Shichiken offered the team an in-depth look at the intricate process of sake production, highlighting the balance of precision and artistry that defines the brewery's approach. From the selection of rice to fermentation and bottling, every step of the process demonstrated the dedication and expertise that goes into crafting high-quality sake.

A particularly memorable moment was the visit to the room where the Meiji Emperor once stayed. This space, preserved with great care, provided the team with a rare glimpse into the brewery's legacy and its historical significance in Japanese culture. The tour emphasized not only the technical aspects of sake-making but also the cultural importance of the brewery.

After the tour, the team enjoyed a traditional Japanese lunch, which was perfectly paired with a sake tasting session. During this meal, the producers joined the group, sharing stories of their heritage, challenges, and triumphs in crafting sake. This personal interaction enriched the experience, offering a deeper understanding of the passion and dedication behind every bottle of Shichiken sake. The visit to Shichiken Brewery provided the team with a profound appreciation of both the history and the craftsmanship that define the Japanese sake industry.



## DAY 4: DECEMBER 4TH

### Visit to the Financial Museum of Yamanashi Chuo Bank

On the same day, all SEED program attendees visited the Financial Museum of Yamanashi Chuo Bank, where they participated in an engaging presentation about the bank's mission to support the regional economy and foster individual growth. The assembly was introduced by representatives from Yamanashi Chuo Bank, followed by remarks from Juan Carlos Díaz, representing the professors, and Estefanía Moreno, representing the students.

The presentation highlighted the current economic landscape of Yamanashi, focusing on key industries such as jewelry, sake, wine, and textiles. It provided a comprehensive overview of the region's strengths and the challenges these industries are working to overcome. To make the session more interactive, quiz questions were incorporated throughout the presentation. The participants demonstrated their knowledge of Yamanashi's economy by answering most of the questions correctly, which added a dynamic element to the session.

Following the presentation, attendees were divided into two groups due to space limitations, and each group took a tour of the museum. The exhibit showcased the history of money production in Japan, including the historical challenges and solutions that shaped the development of modern banknotes. The museum also detailed the contributions of key figures in the history of Japanese currency, with a particular focus on the role Yamanashi Chuo Bank has played in shaping Japan's current economic landscape and physical currency.



## DAY 5: DECEMBER 5TH

### Courtesy Visit to the Governor of Yamanashi Prefecture

On December 5, 2024, SEED Program students had the significant opportunity to visit Yamanashi Prefecture Hall, where they met with key authorities from the region. The visit started with a brief welcoming speech by Goro Mutsuura, the Representative Director of the Gorom Association. This was followed by remarks from Professor Monica Baron of the University of Rosario, Colombia, and a speech by student Samuel Villa from EAFIT University, Colombia. The speeches set the stage for a meaningful exchange, and the students were then addressed by the Governor of Yamanashi Prefecture, Kotaro Nagasaki, and Vice Governor Ko Osada.

Governor Nagasaki said, "I have heard that SEED is a wonderful initiative that provides an opportunity for outstanding students selected from universities in Japan and South America to learn about social entrepreneurship and regional revitalization together. I am extremely honored that such a program is being held in Yamanashi again this year. The theme of this year's program is the revitalization of the prefecture's wine, sake, jewelry, and textile industries. I have high hopes that the participating students will draw out the potential of the prefecture's traditional industries and propose new business ideas that will contribute to the development of the local economy."

The Vice Governor spoke in detail about the critical role of the sectors covered by the SEED Program—textiles, wine, sake, and jewelry—in the local economy of Yamanashi. He expressed enthusiasm and openness to the proposals that the students had prepared, highlighting the importance of these industries for the region's economic development.



# DAY 5: DECEMBER 5TH

## Afternoon Session: Coworking Space and Final Pitch Preparation

In the afternoon, the students gathered at a coworking space where they continued working on their presentations. This session was dedicated to rehearsing for the final pitch, which was scheduled for later in the week. Under the guidance of their professors, the students received constructive feedback and made final adjustments to their presentations. This collaborative environment allowed the participants to refine their proposals, ensuring they were well-prepared to present their ideas to a wider audience.

The feedback provided by the professors was crucial in enhancing the quality of the presentations, and the students used this time to incorporate suggestions and polish their pitch delivery. The preparation session concluded with a sense of accomplishment and readiness for the upcoming public pitch event.





## DAY 6: DECEMBER 6TH

### Group Rehearsals for Final Pitch

The day began with an essential rehearsal session for the final pitch presentations, where SEED Program participants fine-tuned their proposals under the guidance of Professors Monica Baron and Juan Carlos. The rehearsal was an important step in preparing the students for the upcoming final presentations, where each team would present their ideas to a wider audience, including the program's guests and industry leaders.

During the session, the students presented their work twice, allowing them to identify areas for improvement. The first round of presentations revealed some gaps in pacing and transitions, which were promptly addressed in the second rehearsal. The professors provided constructive feedback on how to improve clarity and flow, ensuring that each team's presentation conveyed their ideas in a clear, engaging, and confident manner. The practice allowed the students to refine their storytelling techniques and effectively communicate the cultural significance and value of their proposals. By the end of the session, the teams felt well-prepared and confident in their ability to deliver polished presentations at the final pitching event.



## DAY 6: DECEMBER 6TH

### Final Pitching Event

The culmination of the SEED Program took place on the afternoon of December 6th, with the final pitching event in Yamanashi. This event marked the end of months of hard work and collaboration. The event opened with speeches from key figures, including Goro Mutsuura, CEO of the GOROM Association, and Professor Ricardo Peña, the mentor of the SEED Program. Their remarks emphasized the significance of the event and the importance of the students' contributions. The speeches set an inspiring tone for the presentations that followed.

The program's four teams presented their consulting projects, each offering innovative ideas for expanding traditional Japanese industries into the Latin American market. The Textiles team emphasized the importance of understanding the Japanese textile market and the need for supplier diversification. The Jewelry team proposed three creative ideas to preserve traditional jewelry techniques while appealing to younger audiences: a video game, a jewelry tourism route, and a chatbot assistant. The Wine team outlined a strategy for introducing Shirayuri Winery's wines to Latin America, focusing on premium pricing, wine tourism, a multilingual website, and global distribution. Finally, the Sake team proposed adapting sake to suit Latin American preferences with three product variations, including fruit infusions, cocktail recipe handtags, and nature-inspired packaging.



## DAY 6: DECEMBER 6TH

The event was attended by industry leaders and attracted media coverage from the local TV station UTY. At the conclusion of the event, each producer shared a brief message of gratitude and enthusiasm for the students' innovative ideas. Notably, one guest, Shieki-san, shared his experiences in Brazil and emphasized the importance of building trust to achieve success in business. His remarks resonated with the audience and highlighted the potential for continued collaboration between Japan and Latin America. The event's impact, amplified by the media coverage, underscored the importance of cross-cultural partnerships and their potential to shape a prosperous future for the region.



## DAY 6: DECEMBER 6TH

### Crafting Our Own Hanko

Following the pitching event, the students participated in a culturally enriching activity: crafting their own Hanko, a traditional Japanese seal with deep cultural and historical significance. The session was led by Mr. Hanada, a sixth-generation artisan dedicated to preserving the Hanko tradition. Mr. Hanada shared the history of Hanko, explaining that this practice dates back to ancient Mesopotamia and has remained a cornerstone of Japanese culture. Hanko serves as a personal signature, symbolizing identity and intention in official documents.

The students selected a Kanji character or symbol that held personal meaning, such as freedom, elegance, happiness, and determination, to represent themselves. Under Mr. Hanada's guidance, the students carved their chosen symbols onto their seals, a process requiring precision and patience. The students were assisted by Master Kobayashi, who helped refine the seals to ensure they reflected the skill and effort put into the carving.

After completing their Hanko seals, the students filled them with ink and pressed them onto paper, creating a tangible reminder of the rich cultural experience. This activity provided an opportunity to connect with Japanese traditions and leave with a personalized artifact representing the students' connection to Japanese culture.





# DAY 7: DECEMBER 7TH

## The Excursion Trip to Mt.Fuji área

The final day of the SEED Program began with an exploration of the majestic Mount Fuji and its surrounding cultural landmarks. The participants visited several significant sites that showcased the natural beauty, history, and traditional culture of the region.

### Fuji Sengen Shrine

The first stop was the Fuji Sengen Shrine, located at the northern starting point for Mount Fuji's ascent. This historic shrine, nestled within a dense forest, is accessed via a long, scenic approach lined with stone lanterns and towering cedar trees. Participants were struck by the peaceful atmosphere and the surrounding natural beauty, which made it a perfect setting for reflection. The visit included opportunities for photography, souvenir shopping, and participating in omikuji, a Japanese tradition where visitors draw random fortunes.

### Oshino Hakkai

The group then traveled to the Hoshino Hakkai, a set of eight picturesque ponds in Oshino, known for their crystal-clear water that sustains local fish and plant life. The serene environment offered a tranquil space to observe nature and take in the scenic views of the area, providing a peaceful contrast to the day's earlier activities.

## DAY 7: DECEMBER 7TH

### Iyashi no Sato

Next, the participants visited Iyashi no Sato, a village that has been transformed into a cultural and artistic hub. Over twenty buildings in the village have been repurposed as shops, restaurants, museums, and galleries, each specializing in traditional Japanese crafts. Participants were able to try their hand at creating incense bags or owl figurines in artisan workshops. The experience also included a chance to try on traditional kimonos and enjoy a stroll through the village, further immersing themselves in the local culture and craftsmanship.

### Boat Cruise

Following a relaxing boat cruise, which offered stunning views of the coastline and surrounding mountains, the group explored the charming Motomachi district. Here, they visited local stores and markets, sampling regional delicacies and beverages. This exploration of traditional Japanese crafts and souvenirs provided the participants with a deeper understanding of the region's artistic heritage while fostering meaningful interactions with local proprietors.



## DAY 7: DECEMBER 7TH

### Onigiri Making at a Historic Hotel

In the afternoon, the group visited a historic hotel that has been maintained for over 300 years through successive generations. Here, participants received expert instruction in the art of making onigiri (Japanese rice balls) from two highly skilled chefs. The session included a tour of the hotel's facilities, followed by a tasting of the onigiri prepared during the workshop. This hands-on culinary experience gave the participants a deeper appreciation for Japanese food traditions.

### Shirayuri Winery

The final stop of the day was a tour of Shirayuri Winery, where the group learned about the winery's rich history and had the opportunity to taste a selection of their unique wines. These included cherry blossom and cherry wines, alongside a dark red wine, which were paired with complementary appetizers. The tasting session provided a perfect conclusion to the day, offering insights into the production of regional wines and their place in the broader cultural landscape of Yamanashi.





# DAY 8: DECEMBER 8TH

## Day of free activities in Tokyo

Following the day trip to the vicinity of Mount Fuji, the entire SEED 2024 team returned to Tokyo to stay at a hotel in the Asakusa district. After checking in, free time was given for participants and professors to explore the city, take photos, and enjoy traditional food.



## DAY 9: DECEMBER 9TH

### Visit to the Argentine Embassy

On December 9, the SEED Program participants had the privilege of visiting the Argentine Embassy in Japan. Upon arrival, the group was warmly welcomed by Eduardo Tempone and his secretary, Mauricio Germán Muñoz. The atmosphere at the embassy reflected Argentina's rich culture, with elements that evoked the country's heritage. As part of the visit, participants were treated to traditional Argentine delicacies, which added a personal and cultural touch to the experience.

The visit began with a series of introductions, followed by a deep discussion on how the SEED Program had impacted the students' professional and personal lives. The conversation naturally evolved into a thought-provoking exchange about the similarities and differences between Argentine and Japanese cultures. After exchanging insights, the group realized that the two cultures have far more in common than initially thought. This realization sparked new perspectives on the potential for deepening cultural and business ties between the two countries.





# DAY 9: DECEMBER 9TH

## Visit to the Colombian Embassy

The SEED Program students, including participants from EAFIT, Los Andes, and El Rosario universities, were warmly welcomed at the Colombian Embassy residence. This visit was a celebration of both diplomacy and cultural exchange. The group was introduced to the Third Secretary of the embassy, who guided the conversation on how the program had broadened the students' perspectives and deepened their understanding of cultural connections between Latin America and Japan.

As part of the visit, participants enjoyed traditional Colombian snacks, a nostalgic reminder of their roots. The snacks provided a unique opportunity to reflect on their cultural identity while exploring the potential for collaboration between Latin America and Japan. Additionally, the group toured the Japanese-style house within the embassy residence, which offered a sense of harmony and mutual respect between the two cultures, further strengthening the themes of exchange and collaboration.

The visit to the Colombian Embassy was a moment for students to reflect on their roles as cultural ambassadors. They left inspired, carrying with them not only the taste of their heritage but also a renewed sense of purpose in building bridges between Latin America and Japan.



## DAY 9: DECEMBER 9TH

### Visit to the Brazilian Embassy

On the same day, Brazilian students had the remarkable opportunity to visit the Brazilian Embassy in Tokyo. Accompanied by professors Marcelo Zorovich and Victor Grinberg, the group was welcomed by César Yip, the head of the Public Diplomacy & Press Section, who delivered an engaging presentation about the history and contemporary aspects of Brazil-Japan relations.

Mr. Yip highlighted the strong cultural, economic, and political ties between Brazil and Japan, touching on areas such as trade relations. Key sectors like iron ore, poultry, coffee, and aluminum were discussed, along with the fact that Brazil has the second-largest Japanese community in the world, just behind Japan itself. The students and faculty had the chance to engage in meaningful conversations with Mr. Yip, where they explored potential opportunities for future cooperation between the two countries.

The visit also featured a taste of Guaraná soda, a beloved Brazilian beverage, allowing participants to further immerse themselves in Brazilian culture. This experience enriched the students' understanding of international relations and inspired them to consider future opportunities in diplomacy and global cooperation.



## DAY 9: DECEMBER 9TH

### Visit to Nippon Koei

The day concluded with a visit to Nippon Koei, a renowned Japanese engineering consulting company with multiple offices worldwide. During the visit, participants were introduced to the company's mission and vision. A brief conference on starting a business was held, with a focus on decision-making techniques and leadership skills. The students had the opportunity to work alongside consulting agents who provided insights into their projects, offering recommendations to make the ideas presented by the Sake, Jewelry, Wine, and Textile teams more realistic and actionable.

The visit proved to be enlightening for those interested in multidisciplinary work and consulting. Students learned about management challenges and practical tools like PESTEL and SWOT analysis, which are crucial for businesses. This experience gave participants a deeper understanding of engineering consulting and the role of engineers in shaping society, further enhancing their problem-solving skills and creativity.

The hands-on feedback from the consultants was invaluable, helping the students refine their projects and develop the skills necessary to bring their ideas to life.





# DAY 10: DECEMBER 10TH

## Visit to Tsukuba University

On Tuesday, December 10th, the SEED Program students had the opportunity to visit Tsukuba University, located just outside Tokyo. The group traveled from Asakusa, Tokyo, arriving at the university campus around 10:00 a.m. Upon arrival, the students were warmly welcomed by Tsukuba University students, who guided them to the classroom where the session would take place.

The session began with introductions, where the students were divided into groups. Each group consisted of four Japanese students and two Latin American students. The interaction began with a lighthearted exchange of popular candies from their respective countries, which created an informal and engaging atmosphere. The groups then discussed a range of topics, including security, environmental issues, and cultural aspects in Japan, Colombia, Brazil, and Argentina.

The discussions were insightful, with students highlighting several pressing issues. Some groups discussed the rising cost of food as a consequence of global warming, while others contrasted the advanced water purification systems in Tokyo with the challenges faced by many Latin American countries. Cultural differences were also a focal point of conversation, especially the influence of Japanese pop culture, which has had a significant impact on various nations. At the conclusion of the discussion, the students participated in a survey where they provided feedback on the session and shared reflections on the lessons learned through this cross-cultural exchange.



# DAY 11: DECEMBER 11TH

## Visit to Suginami Incineration Plant

On December 11th, the SEED Program participants visited the Suginami Incineration Plant in Japan, where they were given a detailed tour of the facility. The tour began with an introductory video that illustrated the waste management process at the plant, including how waste is sorted, processed, and converted into energy. The system was designed to reduce pollutants and maximize energy efficiency, highlighting Japan's innovative approach to waste management.

One of the most striking moments of the tour was observing the unloading process, where trucks brought in large amounts of waste daily. It was fascinating to see how efficiently the sorting process was carried out to separate recyclable materials from hazardous substances, which were removed to protect both the environment and public health.

The plant not only incinerates waste but also generates energy from the heat produced during combustion. This process contributes to reducing landfill waste while helping Japan meet its environmental sustainability goals. The visit underscored Japan's commitment to transforming waste management challenges into renewable energy solutions, demonstrating the country's technological innovation and environmental consciousness.



## DAY 11: DECEMBER 11TH

### Meeting with the Vice President of Meiji University

The SEED Program students had the opportunity to meet with the Vice President of Meiji University on December 11th. The meeting began with opening remarks from the Vice President, followed by the University President and Professor Victor Díaz. This session provided a chance for students to reflect on their experiences and observations during their time in Japan.

While many participants were experiencing Japan for the first time, the exposure to Japanese culture, both through prior research and direct interactions with local residents, greatly enhanced their understanding of the country. One of the most notable aspects of the visit was Japan's respect for the environment, which the students recognized as an area that could benefit from further exploration and potential adaptation in Latin America.

The presentations concluded with expressions of gratitude from the Japanese participants in the SEED Program. They shared reflections on the insights gained through intercultural exchanges and their visits with local producers, reinforcing the value of cross-cultural collaboration and learning.



## DAY 11: DECEMBER 11TH

### Visit to METI (Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry)

Later in the day, the SEED students visited the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI), where they were warmly received and escorted to a conference room. The director and staff of the ministry introduced themselves, and opening remarks were made by Goro-san, representing the professors, and a student representative.

The team leaders then presented summaries of the work accomplished over the last six months, highlighting the key findings and solutions offered to the producers. This session provided an opportunity for the students to showcase their hard work and the outcomes of their projects.

After the formal presentations, the director shared concluding remarks, and the meeting transitioned to a more informal atmosphere with food and drinks provided by the ministry. The students and ministry staff engaged in lively conversations about their cultures, exploring similarities, differences, and curiosities. The night ended with music, singing, and dancing, further enhancing the sense of camaraderie and connection. The warm and welcoming environment of the meeting made the students feel appreciated, bringing the day to a joyful conclusion.





## DAY 12: DECEMBER 12TH

### Visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)

On December 12th, the SEED 2024 participants were given the opportunity to visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) in Tokyo, Japan. Upon arrival, the students were welcomed by representatives from the Japanese diplomatic corps, who gave an informative presentation about Japan's foreign relations, particularly with Latin America.

The diplomats began by revisiting the historical ties between Japan and Latin America, which have been established for over a century, starting with agreements between Japan and Peru. They emphasized the importance of Latin America as a significant economic market, a region rich in natural resources, and home to the largest Nikkei community in the world, consisting of 3.1 million Japanese immigrants and their descendants.

The diplomats also shared Japan's most recent diplomatic activities related to Latin America, such as Prime Minister Kishida's speech at the University of São Paulo in Brazil in May 2024 and the visit by Prime Minister Ishiba to Rio de Janeiro in November 2024, where he participated in the G20 summit.

A unique part of the presentation was the diplomats' personal stories about their experiences serving in Latin America. They highlighted the importance of promoting Japanese pop culture, which has become an integral aspect of Japan's diplomatic efforts in the region. Some diplomats even humorously mentioned that they had dressed up as anime characters to participate in various cultural events and fairs, showcasing Japan's soft power and the role of cultural exchange in strengthening international relationships.





## DAY 12: DECEMBER 12TH

### Latin America Event with Meiji University Students

Later in the day, SEED participants engaged in a joint class with students from Meiji University. The class was divided into groups based on themes such as "Culture," "Economy," "Society," and "Politics." These discussions provided an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas, explore new insights, and understand the perspectives of their Japanese peers. By focusing on familiar topics, the students were able to recognize the cultural differences between themselves and others, deepening their appreciation for the unique aspects of their own cultures.

Following the class, the group spent their free time exploring the streets of Nakano with Meiji University students. A highlight of this excursion was visiting Nakano Broadway, a vibrant hub for Japanese subculture where students encountered various aspects of Japanese anime, manga, and figurines. This visit sparked lively conversations, helping the students get to know each other better and strengthening the connections between the Latin American and Japanese participants.



## DAY 12: DECEMBER 12TH

In the afternoon, the students participated in an event organized by Meiji University students, where they had hands-on experiences with traditional Japanese practices such as calligraphy, origami, tea ceremonies, and kendama (Japanese skill toys). These activities allowed the participants to immerse themselves in Japanese traditions, deepening their understanding of the culture. The event provided a mutual appreciation for each other's cultural heritage and further strengthened the bonds between the students from both regions.



## DAY 13: DECEMBER 13TH

### Visit to JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency)

On the final day of the SEED Program, the participants visited JICA, where they were warmly welcomed by staff and given a comprehensive introduction to the agency's work. After a photo session and introductory remarks, the team learned about JICA's role in international development and the various activities it undertakes worldwide.

One of the key discussions during the visit was about JICA's approach to ensuring the long-term development of the countries it supports. A question was raised regarding how JICA ensures sustainable development after the completion of its programs. JICA highlighted that one of the key solutions is their focus on nurturing local leaders who can drive their country's development, even after JICA's involvement has ended. This approach underscores JICA's commitment to building self-sufficiency within the regions it assists.

The group also had the opportunity to reflect on the SEED program, sharing their feelings, impressions, and insights gained from the activities over the past five months and during their two weeks in Japan. This exchange allowed participants to appreciate the personal and professional growth they experienced throughout the program.





## DAY 13: DECEMBER 13TH

### Disaster Prevention Experience at Sona Area

In the afternoon, the SEED Program participants visited the Sona Area in Tokyo, a renowned disaster prevention experience facility. The purpose of the visit was to educate participants on how to react in the event of a major earthquake or natural disaster. The tour began with a simulated earthquake experience inside an elevator. After the elevator "stopped," participants walked through a dimly lit corridor to a diorama depicting severe city damage caused by a 7.3 magnitude earthquake. The scene, which included fallen utility poles, collapsed buildings, scattered products, and emergency vehicles, created a tense and realistic environment, giving the group an immersive experience of disaster scenarios.

Participants were then given a tablet to take a quiz about how they would respond in various disaster situations, such as what to do in a convenience store during an earthquake. The tour continued with a visit to a mock evacuation shelter, where participants saw emergency toilets, makeshift benches, and plastic bottle chairs. The experience emphasized the importance of preparedness and resilience in disaster-stricken areas.

The tour concluded with a visit to the Disaster Prevention Learning Zone, where participants learned about earthquake mechanics, potential damage in the Tokyo area, and how everyday items can be repurposed for emergency use. Workshops also taught practical survival skills, such as making newspaper slippers and plastic bag rainwear, further equipping participants with the knowledge and skills to respond in disaster situations.



# DAY 13: DECEMBER 13TH

## Certificate Ceremony

The day concluded with the much-anticipated farewell ceremony, marking the end of the SEED Program 2024. This ceremony was a heartfelt celebration of the connections and experiences gained during the two-week study tour. The event began with speeches from the professors, Goro-san, and the staff, who reflected on the profound impact of the shared experiences.

The ceremony was filled with laughter, emotions, and the sharing of memories as participants revisited moments from the program, exchanged traditional foods and gifts, and celebrated the unique cultural identities that brought everyone together. A special highlight was the creative introductions by Marin, which brought smiles and applause from the group as participants received their certificates and captured the moment with photos.

The farewell ceremony underscored the lasting impact of the SEED Program, not only in terms of the professional and personal growth achieved but also in the friendships forged. The event emphasized the importance of cultural exchange, mutual respect, and collaboration, with each participant carrying forward the lessons learned and the memories created. As the program concluded, participants were filled with a renewed sense of purpose, committed to applying the knowledge and warmth gained during the SEED Program to make a positive impact in the world.





# CERTIFICATE CEREMONY



Congratulations to all students for successfully completing the 2024 SEED Program! Your dedication and hard work over the past six months have been instrumental in fostering collaboration between Latin America and Japan, contributing to the growth of local communities in Yamanashi. This certificate is a symbol of your achievements and the positive impact you've made. The GOROM Association is honored to welcome you as proud members of the SEED Alumni family. We look forward to seeing how you continue to build bridges and create lasting change!



**THANK YOU FOR SHARING THIS  
WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE  
WITH THE WORLD**

