

# Project for Promoting the Study Away from Home Programme, “Let’s Study in Akita!”

## Akita Prefecture



### Background

For Akita Prefecture, where depopulation and aging are progressing at remarkable speeds, having many children from other prefectures visit Akita will contribute significantly to regional vitalization. Using prefectural resources such as the warm-hearted people and the abundance of nature, accepting children and students mainly from metropolitan areas as part of the Study Away from Home Programme can be expected to lead not only to increasing the number of visitors but also to the relocation and settlement of families.

### Purpose of Project

This project will provide the “Akita-way” Study Away from Home Programme, in which children and students from other prefectures come to study in Akita, and will eventually promote the relocation and settlement of families in Akita.

### Outline of Project

Two courses are offered, an “Experience-based Course” and a “Settlement-based Course”. First, participants in the Experience-based course attend school for a short period of time and experience the charm of Akita through experience-based activities. Based on their experience, participants are then encouraged to transfer to schools in Akita and eventually to settle in Akita.

### Progress and Achievements

#### 1 The only Custom-made Study Away from Home Programme in Japan

This is a “custom-made” study away from home programme in which the children and students who wish to participate are free to decide the period of their stay and to choose what they want to study. The main feature is that participants can actually go to school and experience “lessons in Akita” at schools which are ranked highly in Japan. Participants are also free to combine accommodation at educational facilities with staying in private homes, which is another feature of this programme.

#### 2 Emphasis placed not only on learning but also on experience-based activities reflecting the regional characteristics of Akita

This project provides not only learning but also a rich variety of activities in which to experience nature, because of the abundance of nature in the prefecture.



A female student from Miyagi studying in the Study Away from Home Programme at the end of May

### 3 Arrangement of social education supervisors who integrally coordinate students' learning and experiences

Educational facilities have appointed social education supervisors who integrally coordinate learning and experience, and support students in every way by giving them advice on studying away from home and by helping them engage in the various activities.

### Situation

The learning situation of children and students who have experienced the Study Away from Home Programme is as follows:

#### 1 School Grade of children and students joining this program, and their period of stay, etc.

Grade/Sex	Period of Stay
8th grade / female	30 May to 2 Jul.
8th grade / male	28 Jun. to 9 Jul.
4th grade / male	19 Jul. to 22 Jul.
4th grade / female	25 Aug. to 31 Aug.
6th grade / female	25 Aug. to 31 Aug.
5th grader/ female	25 Aug. to 9 Sep.
4th grade / male	25 Aug. to 22 Dec.
5th grade / female	20 Sep. to 16 Oct.

As of 22 Dec.

\*Participants are children and students who come mainly from Osaka Prefecture and Miyagi Prefecture, along with other children and students who go to international schools in Malaysia and the United States.

#### 2 What made you decide to join this programme and what is your impression of the programme

- I wanted to take lessons in Akita at a top-ranked school.
- The lesson style is very good because we can learn from each other, for example, in pairs or in a group.

- It is wonderful that the teachers are giving lessons, skillfully eliciting students' views.
- It was good to be in Akita. Akita was rich in nature and I climbed Mt. Moriyoshi to see the sunrise.



An outburst of laughter triggered by a friend's comment

#### 3 Short Stay Study Program Special I

- (1) Period: 25 August to 30 August  
\*Using the difference in the length of summer vacation
- (2) The number of participating children and students: 25
- (3) Grade / Sex / Place of Residence, etc.

Grade / Sex	Number	Place of Residence
1st grade / male	1	Kanagawa
1st grade / female	1	Kanagawa
2nd grade / male	1	Tokyo
2nd grade / female	1	Tokyo
3rd grade / male	1	Chiba
3rd grade / female	1	Tokyo
4th grade / male	2	Saitama, Osaka
4th grade / female	4	Tokyo, Miyagi
5th grade / male	3	Tokyo
5th grade / female	5	Tokyo, Chiba, Miyagi, Kanagawa
6th grade / female	4	Tokyo, Chiba, Miyagi
8th grade / male	1	Tokyo

- (4) Contents of activities
- Lesson experience (Aikawa Primary and Secondary Schools)
  - Raft-making, Rafting (Shikimi Lake)
  - Zen meditation at a temple (Shoubouin Temple)
  - Visiting Isedotai Site
  - Outdoor cooking

(5) Questionnaire Results from Participants (main examples)

1) Lessons

- I was concentrating and listening to my teachers and friends. I learned how to listen to others.
- All the lessons were easy to understand and a lot of fun. The teachers taught us very kindly.
- The way of teaching here was different from that at my school; I listened attentively to my friends and teachers.
- I was surprised to see a lot of people raise their hands and speak up in a loud voice.
- In the group activities, my friends talked to me and I found them easy to talk to.

2) Home study (self-learning)

- Very helpful.
- It was not easy to continue every day, but when I go back to school at home, I would like to continue.



Working hard during home study

- (6) Some of the comments from the children, students and teachers at Aikawa primary and secondary schools which accepted participants

1) Comments from children and students

- We were able to introduce the advantages of our school (such as problem-solving based learning and good relationships between friends) and at the same time, we were able to reconfirm the advantages of our schools for ourselves.
- We enjoyed interacting with those students who were participating in the programme and were able to find out a lot about other prefectures.

2) Comments from teachers

- I spent more energy preparing lessons with the concept of this project as “Let’s Study in Akita!”, a project which symbolises our prefectures education system.
- I found that efforts had not often been made in other prefectures to incorporate problem-solving based lessons and home study, which are common in Akita, and I reconfirmed the advantages of these efforts.
- Seeing the participating students enjoying their interactions with our children and students, I felt that our children and students improved their communication skills.

#### 4 Short Stay Study Program Special II

\*Future Plans

- (1) Period: 25 December to 29 December
- (2) The number of children scheduled to participate in this programme: 16
- (3) Contents of activities
  - Lesson experience (Aikawa Primary School)
  - Making small snow houses known as kamakura, Skiing
  - Mochitsuki (pounding rice to make rice cakes), Cooking a traditional food called ‘kiritanpo’, etc.

## Effects of Project

### 1 Comments from parents of participating students

- I heard a lot from my child about the excellent lessons in Akita, the abundance of nature, the warm-hearted people, etc.
- I am considering moving and settling in Akita.

### 2 Comments from children, students and teachers at Aikawa primary and secondary schools which accepted participating students

- I was able to introduce the advantages of our school.
- I was able to learn a lot about other prefectures by interacting with the participating students.
- I was able to reconfirm how great the efforts of this prefecture are.
- I realized that the children and students in Akita had improved their communication skills.

### 3 Comments from family members in the private houses that accepted participating students

- I was invigorated by the participating students.
- They gave their energy to the community.

### 4 Kita-Akita City Government accepted participating students

- The City Government provided various opportunities to encourage parents of the participating students with an opportunity to move to Akita or to make them more interested in Akita.

### 5 News organizations that introduced the “Study Away from Home” programme

- Articles about this project appeared in the national daily papers, educational newspapers and so on, which triggered inquiries and inspection visits from local governments across the country.  
\*Newspapers: [National] Japan Educational Press, The Yomiuri Shimbun, [Tohoku Region] Kahoku Shimpo, Akita Sakigake Shimpo

### 6 This project received an Excellent Award from the “Advanced Policy Bank” of the National Governors’ Association

## Outlook

### 1 Direction of the Project

- Holding seminars and explanatory meetings for each municipality in Akita and supporting them to start their own Study Away from Home Programme according to the situation in each municipality.
- Continuing to raise awareness among parents of the advantages of studying in Akita based on the experiences of the children and students, and achieving the relocation and settlement of families in Akita in cooperation with the related departments.



Hard work rafting

### 2 Efforts to achieve the relocation and settlement of families

- Making efforts to increase the number of host families for children and students who participate in the Study Away from Home Programme for more than about one month.  
(Happo Town, Higashinaruse Village, Oga City etc.)
- Holding Short Stay Study Programmes in Kita-Akita City, Happo Town and Higashinaruse Village to make the custom-made Study Away from Home Programme more widely known.
- Cooperating with the Population Issue Division of Akita Prefectural Government
  - Joining the Relocation Fair held in Tokyo to



hold explanatory meetings regarding the Study Away from Home Programme

- Cooperating with the NPO Akita Iju Teiju Sogo Shien Center (Akita Total Support Center for Relocation and Settlement)
  - Connecting those who come for consultation on relocation and settlement with the Support Center after their children have experienced the Study Away from Home Programme.
- Cooperating with Kita-Akita City
  - Getting the parents of children and students who have experienced the Study Away from Home Programme to consider moving to Kita-Akita City, and at the same time, implementing a questionnaire to gain further insight into promoting their relocation.
  - Providing the parents of children and students who are participating in the Study Away from Home Programme with an opportunity to see how their children are doing at the schools, at the Aikawa Training Center for School Children, and in the private homes.

## **Reference URL**

<http://www.pref.akita.lg.jp/>

From the official site of Akita Prefecture (Bi no Kuni Akita Net: Beautiful Land Akita Net):

→ Link Collection at “the Prefectural Board of Education”

→ Site Map at “Lifelong Learning”

## **Contact**

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