

Final Report of the 11th Youth Forum

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Mai Ueda Moderator

This year's topic was "Imagining Our Future Together ~Mutual Vision for the next two to three decades~. Imagining future is always exciting for me, what I will do? How is the life in the future? How about future technology? However this is big and vague topic for panel discussion and it was very tough for me as a moderator. Moreover panelists from Japan, Germany, China, Iran and U.S. have different interest, different major and dream, half of them are interested in social issues and the other study technology. I needed to ask each of them "what do you want to tell as a panelist or what do you want to be as a representative of their own country". It took a lot of time with efforts for me. But all of them have very positive opinion to the future, they were inspired each other. They are all passionate to make the world much better and peaceful. I really enjoyed listening what panelists think and joining discussion with them.

Through some online discussion, we discussed especially about future SNS. Developing it so fast, even in this 10 years nobody can expect that most of the people using smartphone and internet allow us to chat with friends all over the world whenever we want. Recently we can do nonverbal communication by Instagram or Snapchat. It becoming easier to connect to the world.

I clearly remember that German panelist's words "the internet world could be the tower of babel". Technology make me feel that people in the world might think almost the same, but they have different background and culture, we have to be sure that we have own interest and own dream. That is why we, this year's panelists are good team to image the world together, this year's youth forum was successful.

In next two to three decades we will work in each department on the frontiers of the world. I'm sure that this experience think us that what can we do for the future, and will make our dream come true with great friends from all over the world.

Japan Kanako Date

The 11th Annual Youth Forum was a very rare opportunity to engage in conversation about the future with students with various different perspectives. In addition to the theme of the forum, we kept in mind a keyword "technology" in order to narrow down the focus of our presentation and discussion, and it helped us deepen our thoughts. Thinking about the theme and listening to the ideas from the panelists gave me a hint for what I want to study in the future.

Reflecting on the days leading up to the forum, I must say that I struggled a lot with my own immaturity and anxiety stemming from my lack of knowledge. I had never felt as much pressure as I did being a Japanese Panelist, and when the forum ended, I was greatly relieved. I had wondered if I would be able to fulfil my part since I was the youngest panelist not knowledgeable in the topic. I constantly found myself confused in the high-level academic discussions at first. However, admirable executive committee members, a moderator and panelists motivated me a lot, and they always reached out their hands to me. Moreover, not only during the preparation period but also on the stage, I was very impressed to see how they always maintain a cheerful yet serious atmosphere. I was very pleased to have an opportunity to work with these creative, respectful individuals who gathered from across the globe.

I would like to express my gratitude again for providing me with such an excellent opportunity.

Germany Jana-Kira SCHOMBER

I had the honour of being part of the 11th Annual Youth Form which took place on the 10th December 2015.

I must admit, when I was first approached by the head of my scholarship organization with the request of partaking in the Youth Forum as a panellist, my initial reaction was feeling honoured to be chosen as a representative for the young German students currently residing in Japan on a scholarship, but almost instantly I was also hit by a wave of apprehension. Taking on the position of a panellist means having to put a lot of time and effort into creating a presentation and preparing for the panel discussion, and I wasn't sure whether I would be able to make enough space in my schedule for it. So despite feeling honoured, I contemplated turning down the request of participating. However as soon as I read the whole mail about the topic and idea behind the Annual Youth Forum I was sold.

This year's topic was "Portray Our Future – Mutual Vision for two or three decades from now" and perhaps it is because I studied computer science and have a special interest in the development of new technologies that that particular topic immediately sparked my imagination. I was not only interested in getting to present how I would imagine the future, or what my wishes for the future were, but on top of that there were going to be other panelists from various countries presenting their ideas as well. The thought of getting to hear their versions, and being able to discuss with them, was what ultimately drove me to accept the invitation.

The preparation for the Youth Forum was, as expected, lengthy and thorough. We had a meeting in person to get to know each other and to decide on a rough direction into which we wanted to take our presentations. A few Skype meetings followed, in between which we refined the focus of our own presentation in order to discuss their content with the other panelists and the moderator. Together we managed to create five very interesting presentations with different topics, which nonetheless managed to have connecting points to each other.

On the day of the Youth Forum itself our day began at 11am already, when we gathered at the FJCC in order to have lunch and proceed to one final rehearsal. Nervous might not even begin to describe how I felt at the prospect of holding my presentation in front of the awaited audience, including H.I.H. Princess Takamado. However, the fact that that sentiment was shared among all the panelists helped alleviate the my nerves a little at least. Because as they say, a burden shared is a burden lessened. And so we spent the hours before the Youth Forum actually began with nervous smiles and encouraging

words to each other. Overall, despite the anxiousness, the atmosphere during the led up to the actual event was very comfortable. It also gave us panelists the chance to bond over all being in the same boat.

As expected, the actual presentation and the following discussion seemed to go by in a flash. I do remember wondering whether I'd be able to make it through my presentation without stumbling over my words too badly, but before I knew it I had already reached my last slide and paragraph. Listening to the other panelists presentations was a very enlightening experience, though I must say especially the question and answer session with the audience stuck in my mind. There were various quite challenging questions, among which some were posed to all panelists and some which were only posed to select few. It was a very interesting experience, getting to know what sort of questions our presentations provoked from those who had listened to them.

During the after party I barely got to eat the delicious food I had picked up from the buffet because I was constantly engaged in interesting conversations with members of the audience who approached me about the topic I had presented. I didn't expect my presentation to have such an impact that people would come to me afterwards to talk about it, but that only made me happier to see that assumption be proven wrong.

All in all the Youth Forum was an incredibly insightful and enjoyable experience and I'm so grateful I could be part of it. It was an experience I wouldn't want to miss in my life, and the friendship with the fellow panelists and the moderator is just one of a lot of positive aspect that came from it. I'm looking forward to visiting the Youth Forum again next year, given that I'll still be in Tokyo at that time, and experiencing the event from the audience's perspective then.

China Huang Bei

Taking part in the 11th Annual Youth Forum as the Chinese panelist was really a wonderful and unforgettable experience for me. When I knew the forum thesis at first, I felt it is a little bit hard to imagine the future since it is such a broad topic and future is always unpredictable. However, by communicating with all other panelists time and time again, we discussed the

future of the world together and finally found out the main point which we would like to share with all audience, that is, technology matters to our current daily life and will also shape our ideal future. This kind of meaningful exchange and communication of ideas among youths from different countries is really beneficial to me and it is also very interesting to hear the opinion of panelists from different backgrounds. I believe that the cross-national and cross-disciplinary discussion is also needed for problem solving in the future world.

As a student majoring in political science, I chose to discuss how technology influences government and specifically the e-government in China. The preparation for my presentation is a chance for me to further study the e-government in China and think about its future tendency. Also, panelists and moderator provided me with many valuable and thoughtful opinions, sharing their different angles to look at the China' case. Furthermore, through the presentation and Q&A sessions I felt very delighted that I was able to introduce the development of e-government in China to all audience and get feedback from them. Thus I think this Youth forum is of great importance since it offers the platform on which the interaction and dialogue between youth and the society could go smoothly. I would like to express my gratitude towards the panelists, moderator, staff members and Princess Takamado who gave a deep speech inspiring me a lot.

Iran Mohammad Saber

Being a panelist in the 11th Japan Youth Forum was a rewarding experience for me. Presenting my idea about the future technology in front of the scholars in an open forum, panel discussion with other panelists, and being questioned by audience was an opportunity that will contribute to my future career. It was a practice to have a dialogue with the scholars whom I didn't know before and try to give convincing answers to their questions.

Each panelist presented his/her own idea about how the future should be or how to solve the current problems. Having different panelists with different backgrounds and ideas about future, I became more concerned about the topics that I didn't think about it seriously like immigration or public health. Discussion about the situation of social network in Iran and China was interesting and I am glad that the audience would like to know about controversial issues in other countries.

Since the topic of my presentation was my research topic at university, I am very happy to have this opportunity to present my ideas and research about future technology in Energy field to the scholars. The feedback from scholars encouraged me to work harder to develop a new technology for sustainable future.

America Alder Ivan Escamilla

Getting the opportunity to participate in this forum was one of the best experiences I have had in Japan thus far. When I was first asked to participate in this event, I was not entirely sure what my role would be, or how I would fit amongst the other panelists. “Technology” was one of the main points tying everyone’s topics together, and some of the other panelists had topics including biofuels and e-government. Meanwhile, my research in the past has involved immigration and social issues; topics that do not immediately revolve around technology, although they certainly have technological aspects to them. However, after talking with the other panelists many times through Skype and LINE, we found an even stronger meeting point for each of our topics: Boundaries and the act of crossing them. Whether it was crossing the boundary between using gasoline and biofuels, or the boundary between real people and people on the internet through SNS, boundaries both physical and metaphorical revolved around each topic, and that drew us closer together in our presentations and panel discussions.

What I was most pleased in doing was sharing a part of my past in the presentation. Being an immigrant myself, there really is no better way to describe what an immigrant experience is like than to explain it in the first person. Of course I had to broaden my own topic a bit in order to both adjust it to an international level, and to adjust it to the panel itself. Regardless, it was exciting being able to talk about a topic I have such an interest in, and even in front of a royal princess. I will surely never forget this experience nor the people I encountered along the way.