

International Youth Conference on Biodiversity (IYCB)

2024.8.25-8.31 YOKOHAMA, JAPAN



International Youth Conference on Biodiversity (IYCB) was held in Yokohama, Japan! The host is the Global Youth Biodiversity Network which was founded in Japan when COP10 was held in Nagoya. The IUCN Japan committee supported preparing the conference and participating Japanese youth. Diverse participants came from more than 80 regions and countries. There were more than 10 participants from Japan.

Here, we will feature reflections from Japanese youth who participated in IYCB.

Ichika INABA

IUCN Japan Committee

Day1



Rio SUGIYAMA
Utsunomiya University

Opening ceremony

Greetings were given by GYBN, the organizer of the conference, as well as by the Ministry of the Environment, the Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the Mayor of Yokohama City, who thanked those involved in the conference and highlighted the significance of youth participation and the efforts of the City of Yokohama.



On the first day of the conference, we held a workshop where participants clearly identified and expressed what they could offer to others and what they hoped to receive in return. This included things like knowledge, experience, and passion.

Day2

Wako SUZUKI

A junior in Shinshu University, Faculty of Science,

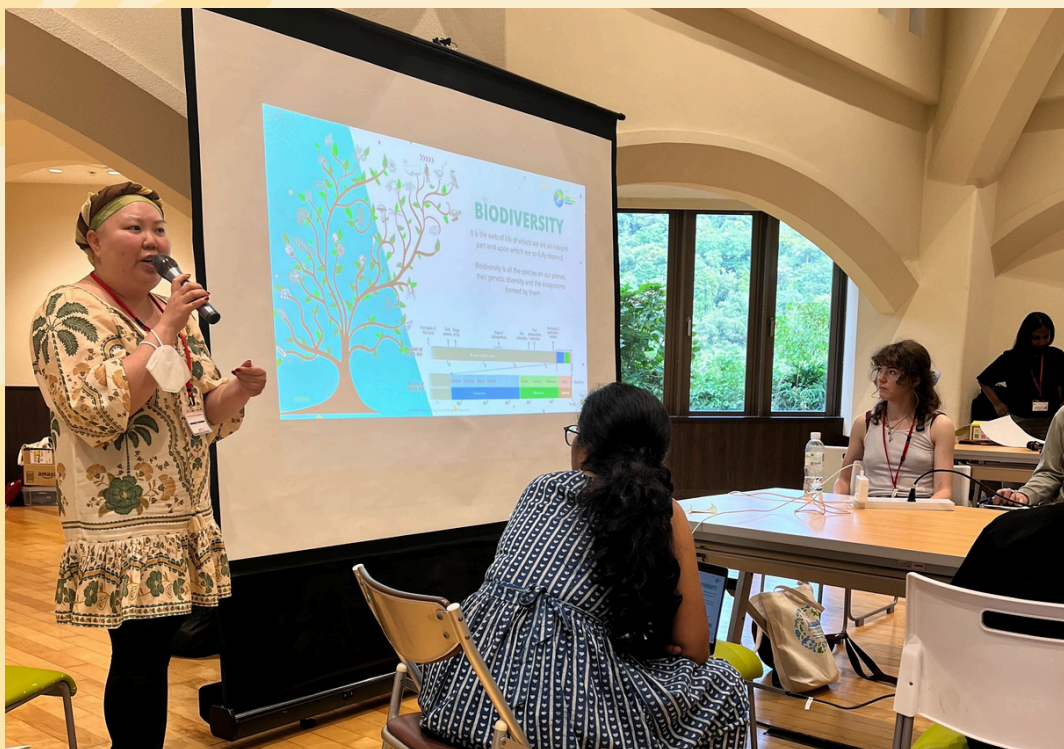
Power of Story

First, we went up to the high ground near our accommodations for a nature session and greetings from two Japanese participants representing the host country. Then, we listened to a lecture by Maggie Fox. She spoke to us about the power of art and narratives. Many environmental conservation activities are presented in society as data and policies during their implementation. However, this information does not reach the people on its own. For new systems and good practices to spread throughout society, we need to move people's emotions by presenting stories through language, art, or narratives.



In the afternoon session, participants discussed their own backgrounds and motivations for conservation, as well as the use of art and narratives.

In the evening session, Melina Sakiyama, co-founder of GYBN, talked about how biodiversity affects society, the GYBN organization and the importance of human rights in conservation,



Day3

Koyu YASUDA

Art sessions

On the third day, we discussed a wide range of topics, including colonial issues, the GBF, our connection to nature, and our ideal future. The participants shared their opinions on challenging topics like colonial issues.

Although Japan should be a relevant topic, we were concerned about the fact that many Japanese people are unaware of what is going on. We also learned that the holders of traditional knowledge do not always wish to utilize their knowledge.



In the evening, the participants presented art and poems. During this time, they also shared their backgrounds, revealing that many had overcome significant hardships to be there.

Day4



Ayaka KISU
Tokyo Metropolitan University

Field Trip 1 AEON Environmental Foundation

AEON Co., Ltd. is one of the largest Japanese retail companies and owns shopping malls, convenience stores, supermarkets, and movie theaters.

For the first part of our field trip, we visited AEON Mall Tamadairanomori to learn about the projects led by the AEON Environmental Foundation.



- Green walking path and rooftop biotope observation
- Tree planting
- Birdhouse painting

Learning about their projects was insightful, as it showcased how corporate initiatives can foster environmental sustainability and engage the community.

Day4

Kokone NAKAMURA
Yokohama National University

Field Trip 2 Excursion in Yokohama

In the second part, we divided into four groups to visit various educational and tourist facilities in Yokohama:

- A : Green Rogaining in Minatomirai 21 district
- B : Sankeien (Japanese Garden)
- C : Yokohama Disaster Risk Reduction Learning Center
- D : Cupnoodles Museum



I participated in Group A's Green Rogaining event.

Five teams competed to earn points in a game-style walking rally, visiting locations related to decarbonization and biodiversity in the Minato Mirai 21 district.

We learned about environmental symbiosis in urban areas while having fun.

Day5



Mana TAKEGUCHI
Tokyo University of Agriculture

Cultural Night

Wearing traditional costumes from their respective countries, they introduced their cultures and national flags. It was a rare and valuable experience to dance with people from different countries. It was a fun night where everyone danced together, respecting each other's cultures



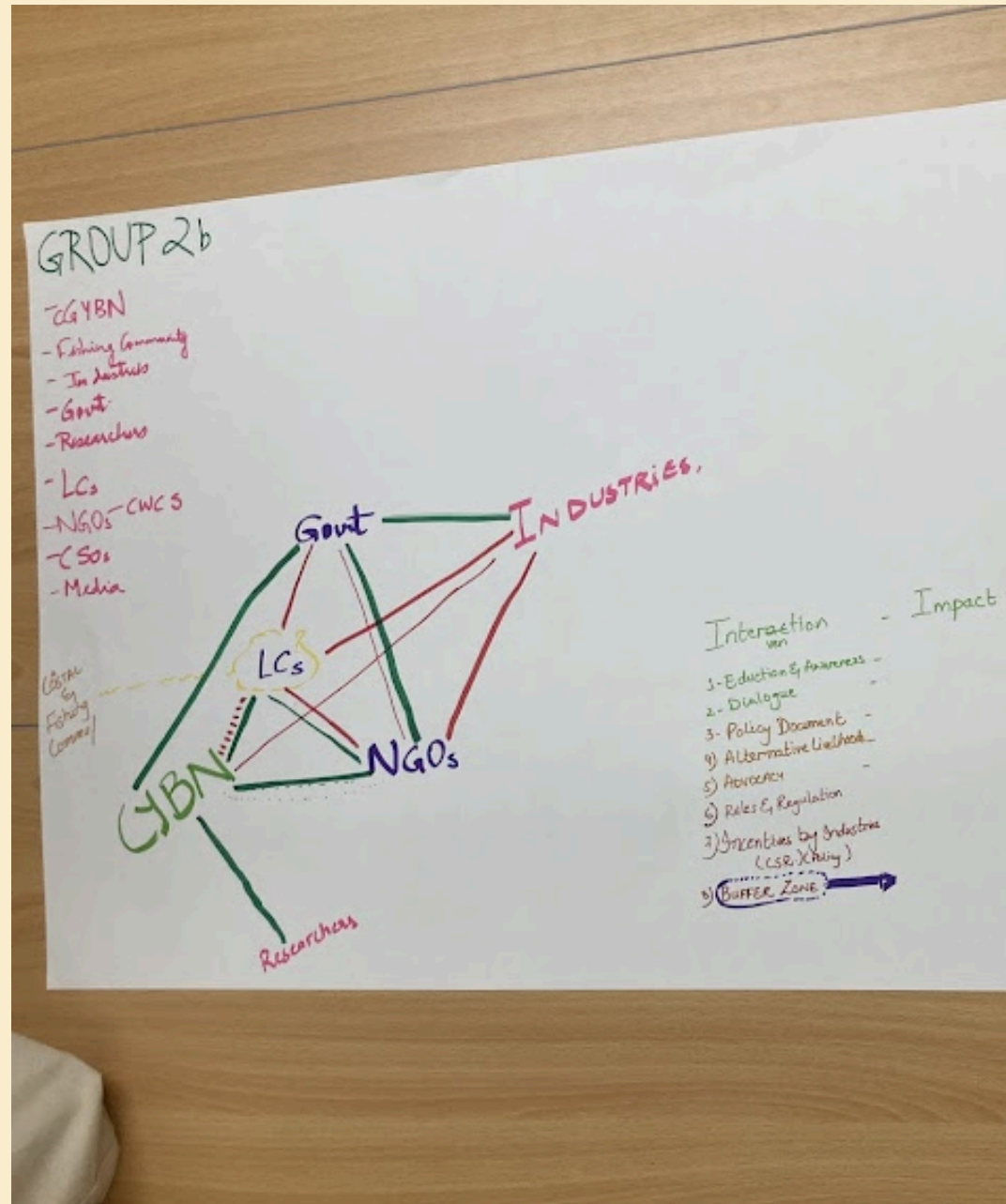
We Japanese wore yukata and performed Bon Odori. "Let's dance together!" we asked, and they all danced happily. They were also very interested in yukata, and we took pictures with many people. We also explained about storks that once became extinct in Japan.

Day5

Naruki SATO

Sector mapping

In the field of conservation, various sectors are involved, leading to different interests and issues. The workshop was held to gain a bird's-eye view of these issues and to come up with solutions. In the workshop, we identified the sectors involved, organized the positive and negative aspects of the relationships within and between sectors, and considered which relationships were strong



Then, after examining the whole picture, we were to think about which sectors to approach and how to approach them. I thought that by doing this, we could better understand the complexity of the issue and explore various ways to address it.

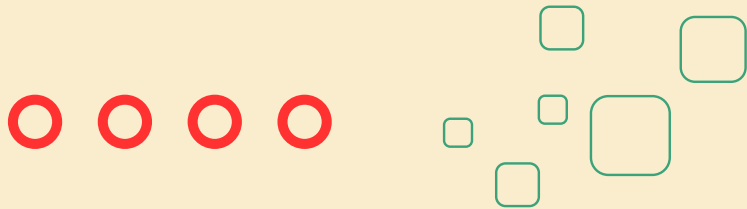
Day5



Mihoko TOMOI
Kanazawa University

Session: Biodiversity Values and the Honorable Harvest

In the afternoon session on the 5th day, participants deepened their understanding of biodiversity through a case study on dam construction. After grasping the overview, the team discussed the perspectives of the people involved and the impacts of the dam after its construction. A key concept in considering these issues was 'Nature's contribution to people.'



Case 1 - The Sunrise River Dam Project

The Sunrise River Dam Project was a proposed hydroelectric power generation project involving the Sefon River on the island of Luzon in the Philippines. Earlier studies on the project assessed that the dam was not feasible because of high estimated construction costs. However, activities under the project picked up pace in 1974, at a time when countries around the globe were reeling from the effects of the OPEC Oil Price Hike of 1973. Alternative sources of energy became highly desirable as the price of oil quadrupled.

The Philippine government led the project in cooperation with a Firm from Germany and the Engineering and Development Corporation of the Philippines. World Bank was responsible for funding the project.

A technical feasibility study was submitted without prior consultation with the indigenous population that was to be displaced by the project.

The project's watershed would have covered 3 municipalities and part of 7 other municipalities including sacred territories of the two indigenous peoples communities. Estimates suggest that the project would have displaced around 100,000 people. The economic impacts for the communities have been estimated at around 100,000 dollars, including losses of farmland and cultivated rice fields. After becoming aware, the Indigenous peoples and local communities resisted due to the threat to their homes, livelihoods, and culture.

Intense discussions were ongoing between the government and Indigenous peoples and local communities. The government considers that the gains from the project would be good for the national economy and that the project would create new job opportunities at the local level. The Indigenous representatives said that their communities would face the social and environmental costs associated with the development pattern that some of their people have already talked about abandoning their lands and that, if this trend continues, they will lose their forests and their sacred places.

Due to the intense discussions, it was decided to obtain a new evaluation of the project, taking into account aspects of economic development, the environment, and human rights. The following activities were selected for an initial assessment: Construction of the dam; Improving the quality of life of Indigenous peoples; and Improving water quality and quantity by conserving recharge areas.

Case 2 - The Sunrise Dam Project

The Sunrise River Dam Project was a proposed hydroelectric power generation project involving the Xingu River in the Amazon rainforest in Brazil. Earlier studies on the project assessed that the dam was not feasible because of high estimated construction costs. However, activities under the project picked up pace in 2011, at a time when Brazil sought to power its rapid economic growth and reduce its reliance on fossil fuels. The Sunrise Dam was seen as a beacon of progress that would bring energy to millions of Brazilians and fuel industries that drive the nation's economy.

A Brazilian consortium composed of nine companies led the project in cooperation with the Brazilian government. The National Bank of Development of Brazil was responsible for funding the project.

A technical feasibility study was submitted without prior consultation with the indigenous population that was to be displaced by the project.

The project's watershed would have covered part of 3 municipalities, including sacred territories of the three indigenous peoples communities. Estimates suggest that the project would have displaced around 20,000 people. The economic impacts for the communities included losses of farmland and cultivated rice fields. The ecological impacts included the alteration of the river's flow and the alteration of the entire ecological cycle of the affected region, which is conditioned by the regime of droughts and floods, as well as would harm fish populations and other wildlife that local communities depend on for their livelihoods. After becoming aware, the Indigenous peoples and local communities resisted due to the threat to their homes, livelihoods, and culture.

Intense discussions were ongoing between the government and Indigenous peoples, local communities, environmentalists and the Catholic church. The government considers that the gains from the project would be good for the national economy and that the project would create new job opportunities at the local level. The Indigenous representatives said that their communities would face the social and environmental costs associated with the development pattern that some of their people have already talked about abandoning their lands and that, if this trend continues, they will lose their forests and their sacred places.

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Nature's contributions to people	Current condition of the NCP	Trends in the provision of the NCP	Drivers of change	
Food and Feed	Health, medicine	Support	Demand	Indigenous people
Supporting identities		↓	↓	Indigenous people
Food and Feed		↓	↓	farmers, farm owners, consumers, traders
Health, medicine		↑	↑	Indigenous people municipalities

In previous sessions, biodiversity was mostly discussed in abstract terms, so it was very engaging to have a concrete discussion using a case study. This case study reminded me of the importance of considering biodiversity comprehensively from various perspectives."

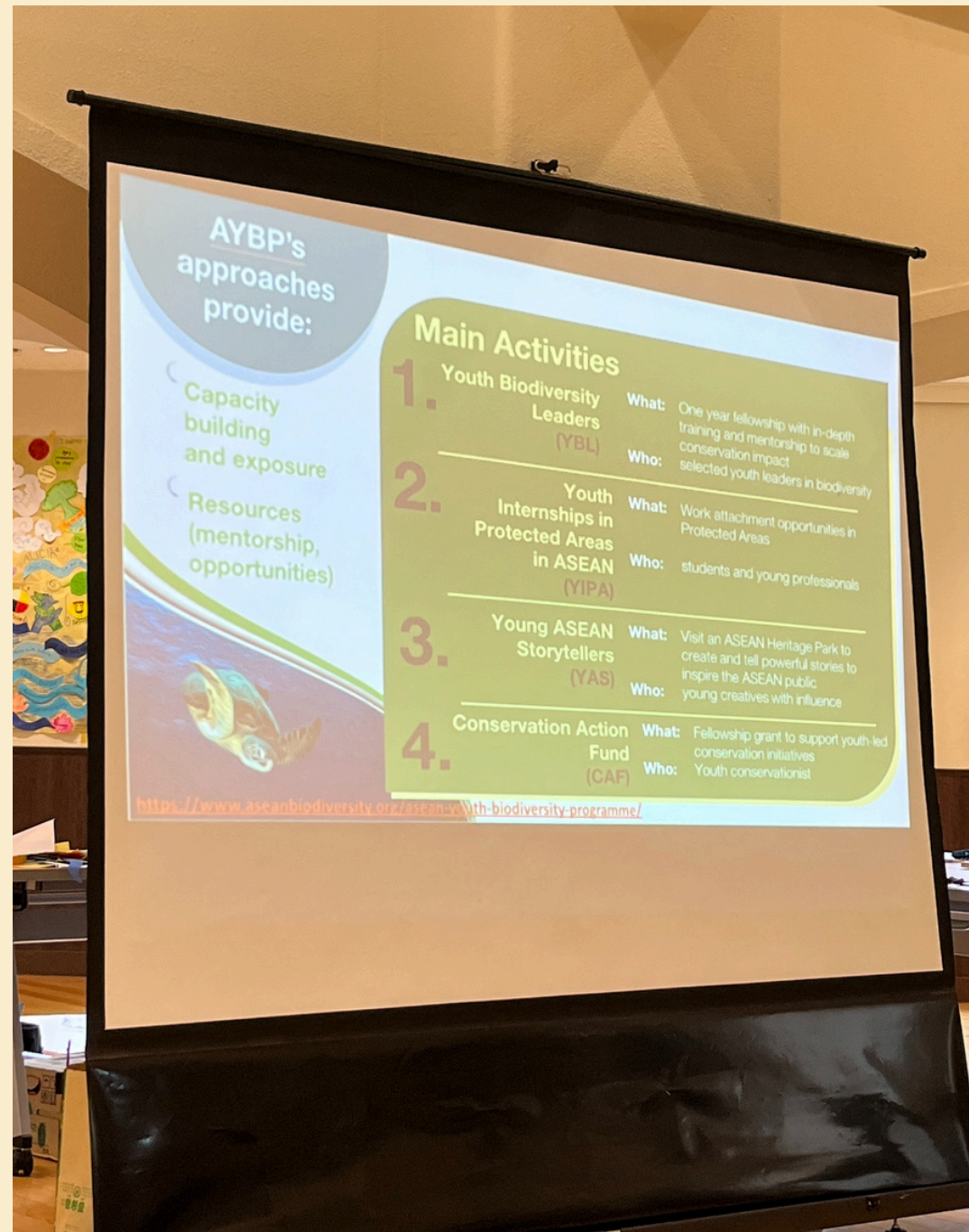
Day6

Haruka Toyama
Japan Youth Platform for Sustainability (JYPS)

Youth Contribution to Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF)

This session was to learn AYBP's advocacy mechanisms in the ASEAN region. AYBP's mapping work, including online surveys and workshops, collects and reflects their opinions on national and international governance.

This mapping work is highly advanced because of its youth-led funded advocacy mechanism and member states' cooperation for capacity building and funding. I was inspired to learn technical work to analyze the data.



The lecturer also gave me many interesting findings from the online survey; youth being active in community empowerment and wildlife conservation, while less active in nature-aligned urban planning and agriculture.

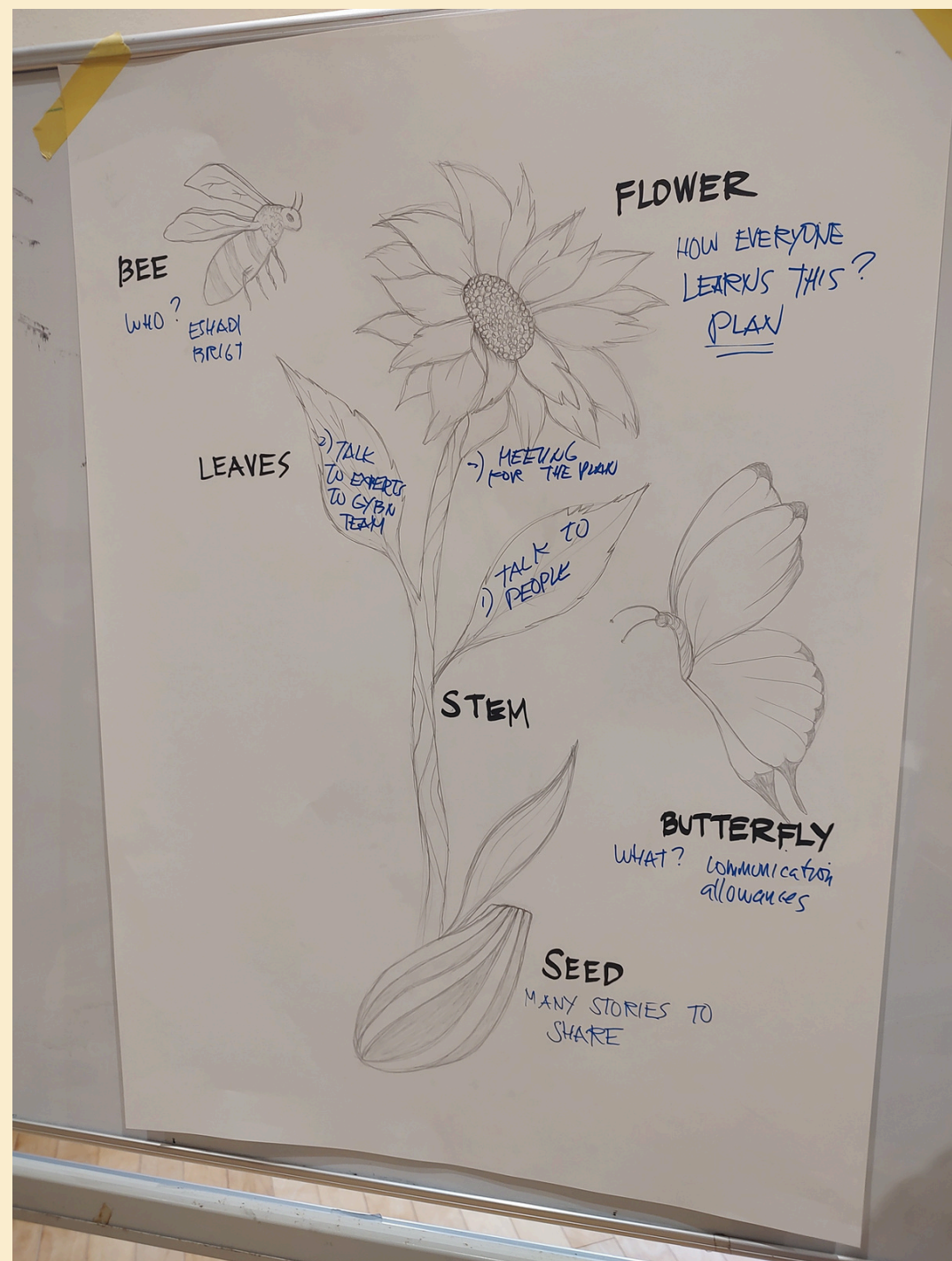
She also shared with us the practical challenges they face, such as a lack of resources/funds and support networks.

Day6

Seed of Hope

Participants drew flowers representing their hopes for the future. The flower sprouts from a seed, symbolizing what we learned from the preceding sessions. The stem and leaves describe what we can do to support the flower—our future plans. For example, we can talk to experts or GYBN members to get support. Butterflies symbolize what is needed to achieve our goals, such as communication and resources. Bees represent those who can support our future plans, like GYBN members. Finally, the flower itself represents our future plans to change the world.

Sayuki MIZOGAMI
The University of Tokyo



After drawing individually, we divided into groups by region and shared our flowers with other members. In the Asia group, every participant shared hopeful and ambitious plans accompanied by beautiful flower drawings. We agreed to keep in touch and share our updates so that our flowers would not wither."

Day7



Shiho Ito

Akita International University

Change Our Next Decade

Closing Ceremony

Closing ceremony was held at Pacifico Yokohama. I had an opportunity to give a speech as one of the representatives of IYCB participants to reflect on the learnings from the conference and call on actions as the next step after the conference. In the speech, I had shared that there are individuals (esp. environmental activists, youths) that are fighting for their lives, families and communities but those stories are not sufficiently shared with all over the world. Since collective actions are necessary to make a change in the societal system that perpetuate them, Japan, and Japanese youth, need to think what contributions we can and should take as one of the constituents of the society.



The recording of closing ceremony is available through the QR code below

