



TOMODACHI Tanaka Sangyo Agricultural Exchange Initiative

Climate & Food System Awareness

Program Overview

The TOMODACHI Tanaka Sangyo Agricultural Exchange Initiative: Climate and Food System Awareness Program is a leadership development program, designed to address the pressing global challenges of climate change and its intertwined relationship with agriculture. Over a 10-month period, this initiative will engage 20 university students — 10 each from partner institutions in Niigata, Japan and Texas, USA — in an immersive curriculum. The curriculum focuses on self-awareness, reflection, and sustainability, while also delving deep into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) concerning agriculture and climate change.

With a hybrid approach of virtual engagement and two in-person gatherings, participants will gain first-hand experience of diverse agricultural practices and environments. Students will be provided with an unparalleled opportunity to delve deep into the diverse agricultural ecosystems of both regions. Texas, known for its agricultural and coastal environment, will shed light on the challenges and innovations in agriculture pertinent to such terrains, especially in the context of climate change. On the other hand, Niigata, with its lush landscapes and rice cultivation, will offer insights into traditional agricultural practices harmonized with nature. This unique blend aims to foster international collaboration, providing students with a platform to share insights, experiences, and innovative strategies, ultimately preparing them to champion sustainable agricultural solutions for our rapidly changing world.



RootSpring's Leadership Approach

RootSpring's leadership philosophy is integral to the program, emphasizing self-reflection, awareness, and sustainable leadership as tools to effectively address global challenges. This approach fosters a deep understanding of one's values, strengths, and the impact one can have on others and the environment.

Leadership Development with a Purpose

The curriculum, inspired by "The Soil of Leadership" by Dr. Britt Yamamoto, underscores a leadership model that promotes growth, resilience, and sustainability. This perspective is pivotal for navigating the complexities of environmental sustainability, encouraging participants to develop leadership qualities that are responsive to the challenges of climate change and sustainable agriculture.

Why Join?

Participants will benefit from a holistic development experience, gaining international exposure and practical experience through a curriculum that is deeply immersed in SDGs related to agriculture and climate change. The program's unique leadership model, focusing on self-awareness and sustainability, prepares students to become effective leaders in the face of global environmental challenges.

Program Phases Overview



Note: Program participants must attend ALL sessions in every phase to ensure a comprehensive learning experience.



Phase 1: Online Learning Component

Dates: October–December, 2024

Location: Online (Zoom)

Number of Online Sessions: 5

The foundational phase of the program takes place entirely online, engaging participants in a series of structured sessions. These sessions cover key topics such as leadership, the history and current state of climate change, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), environmental justice, and the role of food systems in the climate crisis. Through interactive activities, discussions, and case studies, this phase aims to foster a deep understanding of the subjects, preparing participants for the hands-on, experiential learning that follows.



Phase 2: In-Person Gathering in Texas

Dates: March, 2025

Location: Texas, USA

Number of Days: 6

Participants will then gather in Texas, USA, for the first in-person component of the program. This phase allows participants to engage directly with agricultural practices, sustainability initiatives, and climate adaptation strategies that are relevant to the region. The visit aims to provide real-world context to the online learning component, showcasing firsthand the challenges and solutions related to agriculture and climate change in settings significantly impacted by these issues.



Phase 3: Online Learning Component

Dates: April–June, 2025

Location: Online (Zoom)

Number of Online Sessions: 2

Phase 3 of the program encompasses two pivotal online sessions. The first is a collaborative forum where participants discuss the progress and challenges of their group projects, emphasizing teamwork, leadership, and peer learning with an emphasis on collaboration outside of the session to enhance teamwork skills. The second prepares participants for their visit to Niigata, covering logistical details and expectations, and introduces the local staff, aiming to ensure participants are well-prepared and excited for the in-person phase. Together, these sessions focus on developing collaborative skills and preparing participants for the next program stage.



Phase 4: In-Person Gathering in Niigata

Dates: July, 2025

Location: Niigata, Japan

Number of Days: 6

The final phase brings participants to Niigata, Japan, offering a contrasting perspective on agricultural practices, food systems, and climate change adaptation strategies. This in-person gathering emphasizes the global nature of climate challenges and the importance of cross-cultural understanding and collaboration in devising sustainable solutions. Participants will explore how different geographical, cultural, and economic contexts influence approaches to sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Application Process

The program is open to university students from Niigata and Texas A&M who are fluent in Conversational English, passionate about sustainability, and eager for cross-cultural learning. The application process involves an online submission, interview, and review, with a deadline of May 31, 2024. Candidates are encouraged to articulate their background, interest in sustainability, and future aspirations.

Program Cost

Coursework, travel, accommodation, and international travel insurance are covered by the program. Participants are responsible for personal expenses outside of program activities.

Other Reminders

Full engagement in all phases of the program is expected, with an emphasis on personal development and cross-cultural understanding.

This program offers a unique opportunity to develop as a leader capable of addressing some of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time.

APPLY NOW!
Deadline:
May 31, 2024

