

STEPS Students Report

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My stay in Moscow passed much quicker than I thought. This was my first experience to go abroad without any companion, and the longest stay in foreign country. I wanted to make the best use of my stay, I even thought I should, since this visit was supported by so many people in every sense. So before leaving Japan, I prepared quite well for my research, which turned out to be far from enough after starting my work in Moscow. My aim in Russia was to collect Russian region's socio-economical statistical data. I did what I could do without data, and clarified what kind of data I need before my visit. I also tried to collect some data on the Internet. I tried to do whatever I can do in Japan, and wanted to do what I cannot do in Japan when I'm in Moscow. I also wrote paper about my research and sent it to host professors. I made it clear what I have done and what I needed to do, what kind of data I wanted to collect in Moscow. They understood my research well, and by the time I arrived, they gave me some specific directions for my work. For collecting data, I often go to the library in the department. There were so many books but most of them were in Russian, so I usually took my lab mates and they helped me to look for books that contained some information we needed. Prof. Mazurov cared me a lot, and at least once a week he met me to check my work or correct my direction. I also interviewed and consulted with some of the professors in order to ask them about the way to gain data and ask them some specific questions. When I got stuck, I often go to PHD student to ask her for some advices. After some interviews, I realized my research site, which I selected in Japan, was too difficult to gain good results. So I reselected research site, and it took some time for my short stay, but it's necessary to go on to next step. This is where I regretted I haven't chosen research site carefully enough in Japan. There were so many difficulties in Moscow. The biggest one is of course because I cannot speak Russian. That was such a big obstacle for me in daily life. I couldn't get registration card during my whole stay and I couldn't exchange money at the bank because I cannot communicate with the officers, and I mistakenly bought cheese cake when I wanted to buy yogurt. But there was always someone who helped me when I faced some problem. And these experience definitely made me stronger. Most of these kind of program let some students go at the same time, so there's always Japanese community even when we're in abroad. But it's not the case in this program. I was totally alone when I arrived at Moscow and there's no one I've ever met. Nobody knew me at first. But by the time I

leave Moscow, I already started to feel homesick-kind of feeling. I know that's the result of my days in Moscow.

I had precious time both in academic and private sense, and I really appreciate for giving me this chance and arranging everything for me.