

In August 2009, four alumni associations, namely JEPAK, HIDA/AOTS, MEXT, SWYAA; formed an umbrella alumni association to further strengthen collaboration between Kenya and Japan, and the Kenya-Japan Alumni Association (KEJAA) was launched. Since then, the KEJAA grows gradually to have 2,400 members from all over the country.

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Volume 2

August 2014

## Message From The Chairman

By Samuel Kiiru,  
Chairman, KEJAA

Fellow KEJAA members, it is with great pleasure that we once again present this bulletin to you as a way of reminding us of our existence. It is rather unfortunate that we have not been able to hold any serious activity where many of us would be involved. However, individual members have participated in various activities where the Japan Information and Cultural Centre (JICC) have required our input.

As you are aware, KEJAA is an umbrella alumni comprising of people who have been to Japan under different Japanese government sponsored programs and due to the fact that individual alumnus have continued to carry out their activities, this has made it slightly difficult for us as the grand alumni to carry out corporate activities. It is my

desire to see us being involved in at least one activity per year where all of us can express our social responsiveness.



During the last Annual General Meeting (AGM), we were challenged to come up with a mega proposal that would have been funded by the Embassy of Japan. Again, due to technical hitches, this was not achieved though a draft proposal had been written by the task force we appointed. We however hope that during the next financial year we will

be in a position to make it a reality. I urge all members to come forward in this endeavor.

Ladies and gentlemen, we challenge you to come up with ideas on how we can generate some money to make the association self sustaining. This has been a serious challenge to the alumni.

Kindly arm yourself with a copy of our constitution during the AGM to get to know our objectives. I hope this bulletin will motivate you to be much more involved with the affairs of your association as your participation and contribution will be crucial.

Lastly I take this opportunity to thank the Embassy through the director, JICC, for the enormous support they have given us. I wish you all a nice reading.

**\*\*END\*\***

## KEJAA Annual General Meeting



The 3rd KEJAA Annual General Meeting was held at JICC on 23rd of August, 2013. 28 members participated in the meeting. In the meeting, new Board members of KEJAA were officially acknowledged by the members. Former Minister Yoichiro Yamada encouraged further development of KEJAA.

## HIDA/AOTS Alumni Visits Urudi Ratta School

By Dickens Huko  
HIDA/AOTS Alumni

Urudi is a primary school in Kisumu County. Looking at the school as a first time visitor, one would wonder whether there is anything to expect out of the poor learning environment. Except for two permanent classrooms and a small office block, the rest of the structures are very poor temporary sheds that always sends the spines of the school community chilling whenever a storm approaches.

The school was constructed on a small piece of land donated by the late Omulo Oule family and got registered in 1987 by the ministry of Education through the effort of the late Rev. David Ochuodho Omulo.

The school has however performed well over the years.

In a recent visit by Dickens Huko, a member of HIDA/AOTS Alumni Society, who is also the acting Secretary General of KEJAA, he encouraged the school community; teachers, pupils and parents to keep on promoting the spirit of hard work for good results. He reminded the pupils and teachers that they have to keep up with the good results as the only available identity to sustain the school position in the records of achievers.

It is noted that the school has alumni who have gone through famous schools in Kenya like Alliance Girls, Maseno, Starehe Boys' Center and School among others. Some of these alumni have gone on to complete their studies in Public

universities in Kenya while others are still pursuing higher learning in universities and other public institutions.



KEJAA is proud to be associated with Urudi while appealing to well-wishers and donors to support the school's infrastructure.

## SWYAA Making Strides: Power of Youth and Partnerships

By Carol Okello

The empowerment of young people involves the concerted efforts of number of key stakeholders, including Governments, Ministries, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, the media, educational and other institutions, the private sector, family, and community networks, youth peer groups and, above all, young people themselves, Exchange programs such as the Ship for the World Youth Program, which is spearheaded by the Cabinet office, Japan, offers the youth an opportunity to learn starting from within, reflect and see how our actions and utterances affect relations and development of our communities, countries and the globe. The experience in Japan

makes individuals get away from their comfort zone, open their minds and see how other communities relate above all create partnerships that will strengthen programs and skills of young people. For the few years Kenya has participated in the program, we have:

1. Witnessed two community projects developed – *Tupendane* project (The *Tupendane* project supports Eves Day Junior School, a school in the Dandora slums run by a SWY 22 ex- PY, Jonathan Okwiri, currently hosting 150 children) and Support Kenya (The project was established through collaboration of IYEO Japan and SWYAA Kenya and was funded through the generous contributions of Japanese ex-participants. The project was set up

to alleviate the suffering of internally-displaced persons following the violence that erupted in Kenya after the disputed national elections in 2007. The project was held from March 2008 to August 2009).

2. Increased young leaders on the board of national programs like UWEZO fund and the National Youth Council.

3. Seen close to forty ex-PYs visit Kenya and participated in what we term Homestay plus 1, where besides visiting tourist places in the country, the person, gets an opportunity to visit homes of Kenyan alumni, share in the normal life and participates in local development projects run by the alumni and other youth organizations like sensitization and cleanup campaigns.

**'to go is to see, and to see is to know and to know is to learn'**  
**SWYAA**

\*For more information of the Ship for the World Youth Alumni – Kenya visit our face book pages 'SWYAA Kenya' and 'Tupendane International'

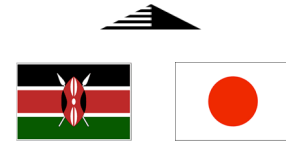


## KEJAA Objectives

- i. To promote social and intellectual interaction between the people of Japan and the Alumni and also within the Alumni
- ii. To contribute to the growth of Japanese Embassy by participating in development projects initiated by the Embassy
- iii. To promote, improve and protect the interest and welfare of the members
- iv. To establish collaborative links with other Alumni bodies and organizations in and outside Kenya.
- v. To participate in the deliberations of the Japanese Embassy and any other meetings in the interest of the development of the Alumni and the Embassy
- vi. To participate in any other worthwhile national and International development activities that will portray the Association and the Japanese Embassy in good light.
- vii. To raising funds for the activities of the Alumni
- viii. To promote cultural and technical exchange between people of Japan and Kenya
- ix. The Alumni will be non-political in all its activities and no person or group of persons will be allowed to use it to promote his/her political ambitions or any other personal interests within or outside Kenya

## KEJAA Management Committee

- Mr. Samuel Kiiru (**JEPAK**) – *Chairperson*
- Mr. David B. Ojwang (**AOTS Alumni society of Kenya**) – *Vice-chairperson*
- Dr. George Ochieng (**MEXT Alumni**) – *Secretary General*
- Mr. Paul Wachira (**JEPAK**) – *Committee Member*
- Mr. Dickens Huko (**AOTS Alumni society of Kenya**) – *Committee Member*
- Dr. John Mativo (**MEXT Alumni**) – *Committee Member*



## JEPAK 30 Years and Beyond

By Paul Wachira  
Chairman, JEPAK

The Alumni which was started and registered on 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 1983, continues to carry on its mandate, to foster good relationships between the peoples of Japan and Kenya.

In our last bulletin we explained what JEPAK is, JICA Ex-Participant Alumni of Kenya, a network of Kenyan professionals trained at various institutions and prefectures in Japan in different fields and levels, under the sponsorship of JICA.

We have continued to network through various activities. On 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 we held a general medical

camp at Nairobi West Chief's Camp targeting the surrounding slums, Kismayu, Upendo, MoW and City Cotton. Over 300 members of the households were treated and given medication.

On 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2013, we took our members and their families for an Educational tour to Aberdare National Park. The Aberdare National Park formerly Sattima Range is a 160 km long mountain range standing at an elevation of 11,480 ft. and named after Lord Aberdare who was the president of the Royal Geographical Society. This is the only social function where members and their families meet to bond and foster good relationships.

On 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2013 we held a National Conference at Panafric Hotel on "Road Safety: - Harnessing Safety on Our Roads." This theme was carefully selected because at that time, road carnage was raising serious concerns locally and internationally. Almost every other day innocent lives were being lost on our roads. At least, the deaths on our roads have now drastically reduced.

The speakers at this conference included line ministries and stakeholders, traffic department, road safety experts from Japan, Kenya Auto Bazaar Association, Matatu Welfare Association, Easy Coach and 2 NK SACCO.

The conference changed the attitude of many people because major causes of accidents on our roads, 85%, are due to human error which can be prevented. Road accidents continue to rob families of the companionship of their loved ones, loss of bread winners; others are maimed and spend the rest of their lives on wheel chairs while huge amounts of resources are spent on post-accident medical care and support. The majority of those who die on our roads are at their active/productive age of 15-45 years.



# KEJAA PICTORIAL



SWYAA Members



SWYAA Team building Challenge



SWYAA Members at a workshop

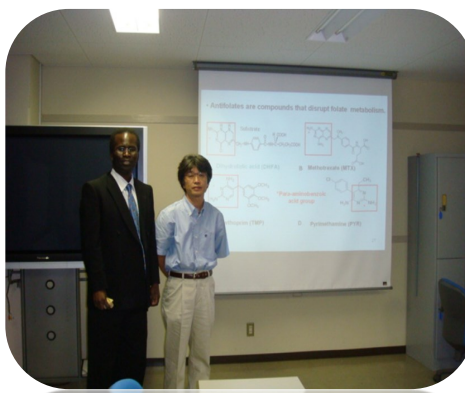


Dr. Aboge Preparing for 'Bon Odori' with colleagues

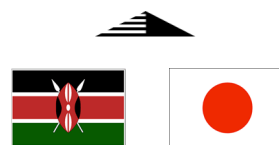
Pictures courtesy of KEJAA Members



Dr. Aboge at a sushi bar in Obihiro city



Dr. Aboge during his PHD Thesis defence at Gifu University



## My Life Experience in Japan as a MEXT Scholar. Dr. Aboge's story

I would like to thank the government of Japan for awarding me a MEXT scholarship amongst other many potential candidates to pursue my PhD studies in Japan. I must admit that winning this competitive scholarship, which involved an elaborate selection process, was a great honor to me.

### **Arrival and adapting to life in Japan:**

My life experience as a PhD student and a JSPS Postdoctoral Researcher was fascinating with memorable personal life experiences. However, some of the experiences were challenging and required me to adapt to the Japanese lifestyle, which involved eating different foods, speaking a new language, and coping with a completely different weather. Nevertheless, as time progressed, I quickly forgot about the challenges because of the kind support that I received from Japanese people. Indeed, when I arrived at the Kansai International Airport, I was received by a very friendly Japanese official. The next day, I was received by equally jovial Japanese in Sapporo, a place that became my home for the next 4 months. At this point, I started making new Japanese friends as well as other international friends, and that's when I adjusted to the Japanese lifestyle. This made me to overcome the problem of being homesick. However, when I moved to Obihiro city to start my PhD study at the National Research Center for Protozoan Diseases, which formed a part of the united graduate school, I had to meet and adapt to new people but this was not as a challenging experience as before.

### **Academic life in Japan:**

With regard to my PhD studies in Japan, the experience was just amazing because I was exposed to some of the best facilities in the world for conducting my scientific research. Furthermore, there was adequate fund for conducting scientific research and publishing. The elaborate research facilities at the National Research Center for Protozoan Diseases in Obihiro city was backed by dedicated Professors/senior researchers who always spared time for me and other students whenever we met serious obstacles when executing scientific research. This enabled me to complete my studies in time and published a number of research articles, which in turn led me to win a very competitive JSPS Postdoctoral fellowship award. One thing that impressed me is the way Japanese Universities work with industries/companies in the private sector to conduct joint scientific research, a scenario which is generally lacking in Kenyan Universities. This ensured that the kind of research that is being done is in line with economic and industrial development.



Dr. Aboge's doctoral graduation at Gifu University

### **Cultural events, food and weather in Japan**

Outside the university system, I had a chance to experience some of the most memorable Japanese cultural events in my life; including the famous "Bon odori", "yuki matsuri", "Hanabi", just to mention a few. I also enjoyed eating Japanese foods such as "sushi", "tempura", "onigiri" and "natto". In fact, some Japanese were surprised that I was able to eat "natto". Nonetheless, I had to struggle a bit to eat "natto" after my first bite. I must admit that one of the places that I visited frequently was "sushi bar" because this was the place I could find one of my favorite dishes. Another thing that is difficult to forget about Japan and especially Hokkaido is the freezing winter weather that sometimes exceeds -20°C and the heavy snows. At first, it was a real challenge to me having grown up in Kenya where temperatures rarely go below 15°C. Nevertheless, I adapted quickly and I could even go for skiing, and see as well as touch snow for the first time in my life. Actually, I had a lifetime opportunity to witness "yuki matsuri"/snow festival in Sapporo, which is one of the famous events that attract tourists from all over the world.

### **Concluding remarks about my life in Japan**

The good things that I experienced in Japan far outweigh the challenges I met. It is difficult to write about everything I experienced in Japan for 7 years in this newsletter. The life experiences were just enormous and memorable. For those who are looking for an opportunity to study abroad, Japan is the country of choice. I am planning to encourage collaborative scientific research work between Japanese Universities/research Institutes and the University of Nairobi. I also look forward to promoting international friendship and cultural exchanges between Kenya and Japan.



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## Kenya-Japan @50

In December, 2013, Kenya and Japan marked the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic relations.

(Photo: Kenya-Japan @50 leaflet)

## Message from JICC Director

Message from Director, Japan Information and Culture Centre (JICC), Embassy of Japan

It is with great pleasure that we announce the successful publishing of the second KEJAA Bulletin. We also congratulate KEJAA on its registration as a Society of Kenya.

Relations between JICC and KEJAA have been strengthened more and more since its establishment in 2009. It is not an exaggeration to say that JICC could not have implemented its activities without assistance from KEJAA. We thank you for your continued cooperation and for your being our good friends.

In 2013, the Golden Jubilee of Japan-Kenya Diplomatic Relations, JICC planned various cultural events including Japanese Drum Concert, Japanese Cultural Festival and School Caravan Program in various

schools in all over Kenya. In all these events, there was participation by KEJAA members in one way or another.

After the 5th Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD V) in June, 2013, Japan increased its focus on Africa. For example, a total of 18 Kenyan students have received the Japanese Government Scholarship in 2014 in comparison to 8 students who received the scholarship in 2013. These students are all future KEJAA members.

We have also seen an increase in the number of Japanese companies showing interest in doing business in Africa. It is our great pleasure to invite representatives of Japanese companies to the KEJAA Annual General Assembly for the first time this year. We hope that the relations between Japan and KEJAA will be further strengthened in various areas including the area of business.

There is a Maasai Proverb that says "There is no one way friendship". Both JICC and KEJAA have put a lot of effort in creating the strong friendship we have today. We thank KEJAA for its continuous support to our activities and we hope that JICC and KEJAA's friendship will be further strengthened through our mutual cooperation.

Yasunori Nakamura

**"There is a Maasai Proverb that says 'There is no one way friendship'. Both JICC and KEJAA have put a lot of effort in creating the strong friendship we have today".**

Yasunori Nakamura