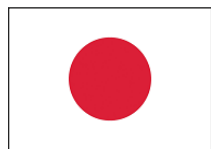


January - March 2019



# EMBASSY OF JAPAN BULLETIN

## 12th Japanese Speech Contest



The 12th Japanese Speech Contest was held at the Embassy of Japan on Saturday, 16th March 2019. The Japanese Language Teachers Association of Kenya (JALTAK) and the Embassy of Japan organized the event

which attracted about 150 people among them 10 Japanese speech contestants and 3 Japanese business presenters. This year's speech contest also had a regional outlook as there was a contestant from Tanzania.

The contest was officially opened by the Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of Japan to the Republic of Kenya, Mr. Yoshihiro Katayama. Following the opening ceremony, the contestants took to the stage to show what they had studied and practiced to that day. While the result of the contest was discussed by the judges, Malaika Group and Vanessa Grant Girls' School entertained the crowd with various Japanese themed performances.

Kenya currently has about 1,100 Japanese Language students.



## Courtesy Call by 2019 MEXT Scholars

The 2019 Japanese Government MEXT scholarship recipients paid a courtesy call to the Charge d' Affaires a.i. Mr. Yoshihiro Katayama, on the 18th of March 2019. The five scholarship recipients will be leaving for their studies in Japan in April 2019.



Scholarships available under the Japanese Government Scholarship program are: Research Students, Undergraduate Students, College of Technology Students, Specialized Training College Students and Teacher Training Students. Applications for the 2020 Scholarship open in mid-April 2019.



TICAD is an open and inclusive platform which brings together a wide range of stakeholders including African governments and regional and sub-regional organizations, international organizations, partner countries, private sector and civil society for innovative and high-level discussions on African development.

## Grant Contract Signing for Japanese NGO Cooperation Grant Aid



The Japan NGO Joint Grant Aid is a fund by the Government of Japan that aims to assist economic and social development projects implemented by Japan's international cooperation NGOs in developing countries and regions.

Between the months of January and March, Mr. Yoshihiro Katayama, Chargé d'affaires a.i., signed, on behalf of the Government of Japan, grant contracts with the Japanese NGOs:

- Health and Development Service (HANDS)
- Japan Center for Conflict Prevention (JCCP)
- RESULTS Japan
- Nippon International Cooperation for Community Development (NICCO)
- Peace Winds Japan

## Japan Celebrates Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP)



Between January and March 2019, fourteen new Grant Assistance for Grass-roots Human Security Projects (GGP) contracts were signed, three projects were started, and three projects were handed over.

### Grant Contract Signing Ceremony

- The Expansion of Nyamonye Integrated Training Center (Siaya County)
- The Development of Educational Infrastructure at Ntoluo Primary School (Narok County)
- The Expansion and Upgrading of Mang'u Dispensary (Kiambu County)
- The Expansion of Kobujoi Mission Health Center (Nandi County)
- The Development of Educational Infrastructure at Kapangoror Primary School (Bomet County)
- The Improvement of Livelihoods of Kerio Valley Communities through Establishment of a Fruit Value Addition Facility (Elgeyo Marakwet County)
- Increasing Water and Sanitation Access in Kiltamany Village with Feed the Children (Samburu County)
- The Development of Educational and Hygienic Infrastructure at St. Benedict Ithanga Secondary School (Murang'a County)
- The Improvement of Educational and Hygienic Environment at St. Benedict Buloma Primary School (Kakamega County)

- The Development of Educational Infrastructure at Simotwet Primary School (Narok County)
- The Reconstruction of Kaghmuu Primary School (West Pokot County)
- The Development of Educational Infrastructure at AIC Wango Primary School (Embu County)
- Empowerment of Vulnerable People through Installation of Equipment for Small Scale Farming (Kisii County)
- Construction of DADREG Community Training Centre (Nairobi County)

### Ground Breaking Ceremony

- The Reconstruction of Kaghmuu Primary School (West Pokot County)
- The Development of Educational Infrastructure at AIC Wango Primary School (Embu County)
- The Development of Educational and Hygienic Infrastructure at St. Benedict Ithanga Secondary School (Murang'a County)

### Handing Over Ceremony

- The Development of Educational Infrastructure at Reten Primary School (Samburu County)
- The Development of Educational Infrastructure at Reteti Primary School (Samburu County)
- The Improvement of Educational Environment at Kimilili D.E.B Special School for Mentally Handicapped Pupils (Bungoma County)

## Aspects of Forging Forward: Blended Artists Talk at the Japan Embassy

In the mind of an anxious young artist, woodcut or woodblock printing may seem old and obscure. Visions arise of tiresome archaic hard work but in real sense, woodblock printmaking is one of the oldest and one of the most interesting forms of the fine art technique.

Japanese woodblock printing flourished during the ancient Edo period in Japan. This is a period in Japan that was characterized by popular enjoyment of arts and culture. Inspired by the world renowned Ukiyo-e Japanese artist Katsushika Hokusai's woodblock printmaking, the Embassy of Japan in its last annual Japanese cultural festival held an art talk and exhibition that provided the audience an opportunity to hear directly from invited Kenyan and Japanese artists, and get to learn more about the connections of their work with Japan, through their use of Japanese concepts, tools, supplies, techniques and more.

**Joy Mboya, the Executive Director of the Go-Down Arts Centre**, who opened and moderated the artists talk session, expressed the need for collaborations between Kenyan artists and artists from Japan. The expressions from the forum were to forge on how artists can engage further in their work with a broadened world view. "Emerging Kenyans and young Kenyan artists are begging to express their creativity, thus forums and art spaces in institutes of art and universities should be enhanced to develop the craft," says Joy, a comment that was also reiterated by **sculptural artist Kevin Oduor**, who is also the Vice Chairman of the Kuona Artists Collective.

**Kenyan contemporary artist, Michael Soi** who often explores issues of his own Kenyan identity and culture in his work, thinks it is important for artists to travel as a form of visual education. "Seeing and

talking to artists in Japan is important in raising awareness and knowledge of East African art," he says. Successfully so in raising awareness, part of Soi's work has shown extensively locally and



Left to Right: Panelists Mary Ogembo, Michael Soi, Mari Endo, John Silver Kimani and Joy Mboya the Moderator

internationally, most recently in Japan in his solo exhibition titled "Faces of the city", Bukamura box gallery Tokyo, Japan.

Michael's art presence in Japan was made possible by **Mari Endo, a Japan born art curator and promoter** who has made efforts to introduce East African arts in Japan. Mari concurs that East African art is still new in Japan, she also advocates for and supports the exchange of ideas among Kenyan and Japanese artists. "When I was in Japan, I had not specialized in print making but I got amazed with Katsushika Hokusai's printmaking work. After retirement, when I became an artist based in Kenya, John Silver, a renowned woodblock artist, taught me the reduction approach to printmaking, a technique that I now use and I am fascinated with." Mari's art is mainly centred on her surroundings and experiences.

### **Artist John Silver Kimani**

partly sees continuity of Kenyan art if more Kenyans embrace woodblock printmaking. He agrees that just like how the Japanese view and appreciate it, there is wit and depth in any art work

produced using the woodblock printmaking style. John Silver has equally benefited from Mari Endo's efforts to promote East African art in Japan. Silver's surreal images from woodblock print have been shown in Japan and in 2015, he was awarded the best print-maker of the year by the Fei Art Museum in Yokohama, Japan.

Mimicking Hokusai's Ukiyo-e work, to cut and print from a woodblock, John Silver's and Mari Endo's designs or drawings are made on a piece of wood, the untouched areas are then cut away, leaving the raised image which is then inked.

Another striking artist is **Mary Ogembo**, who celebrates women in her work. "Women are disadvantaged in the African society thus my art celebrates the success of the African woman," says Mary. Just like Soi, Mary is also of the view that artists require more exposure and their art exposed. "Japan is well known for printmaking and so it is good for artists from Kenya to learn from intricate Japanese art," she reiterates.

Besides the art talk, there was an exhibition of arts from the artists who were part of the talk and other renowned artists, who are using Japanese concepts or materials in their work. The artists included: John Silver Kimani, Becky Kaptan, Mari Endo, Gor Soudan, Dennis Muraguri, Patti Endo, Meshak Oiro and Erick Gitonga. The Japanese Cultural Festival was held on 3rd November 2018.



Visitors looking at exhibited art at the Japan Information and Culture Centre

## School Caravan to Kakamega and Kisumu County

The mission of the Japan Information & Culture Centre is to promote better understanding of Japan and its culture by providing a wide range of information, educational services and events to the public. One of the ways in which this mission is fulfilled is by visiting various learning institutions around the country so as to share with them the different aspects of Japan and its culture.

Between the 22nd and 24th of February 2019, the Embassy of Japan in Kenya left for a three day school caravan to Kakamega and Kisumu County.



## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

### April 2019

Applications for 2020 MEXT Scholarships Open (mid April)

### May 2019

MEXT Scholarships Seminar (3rd and 4th)

### June 2019

Seventh Nairobi International Cultural Festival (9th)

### August 2019

Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) in Yokohama, Japan [28th to 30th]

### September 2019

Japanese Movie Festival (Dates To be Confirmed [TBC])

Rugby World Cup in Japan (20th - 2nd November)

### October 2019

Woodprint Workshop (TBC)

### November 2019

Japan Day (TBC)

Judo Japanese Ambassador's Cup (TBC)

### December 2019

Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) [1st]

Applications for 2020 Teacher Training Scholarship (TBC)

### March 2020

Japanese Speech Contest (TBC)

## CONTACT US



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