



# EMBASSY OF JAPAN BULLETIN

## Japan Booth at the 7th Nairobi International Cultural Festival



On Saturday, June 08, 2019, the Japan Information & Cultural Centre participated in the 7th Nairobi International Cultural Festival. The Nairobi International Cultural Festival is an annual event organised by the National Museums of Kenya. The festival is a day of cultural expressions aimed at providing a platform for all countries represented in Kenya to come together and present their diverse cultural heritage.

The Japan Booth celebrated a wide variety of Japanese cultural aspects such as origami, shodo, yukata wearing, flower arrangement and Japanese green tea tasting. Participants at the Japan Booth were able to get firsthand experience in these activities.

In addition to the experiential activities, the Japan Booth also featured an exciting display of the upcoming Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) and the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games which will be held in Tokyo, Japan.

Apart from the activities in the Japan booth, there were two dance performances based on Japanese pop culture. A final dance featured staff from the Embassy of Japan and students from Vanessa Grants Girls Secondary School.



## 2020 MEXT Japanese Government Scholarship Seminar



to apply for the scholarship. It was held at the Embassy of Japan on the 10th and 11th of May 2019. The attendance was overwhelmingly impressive as the multipurpose hall was filled to capacity.

The Japan Information and Culture Centre (JICC) staff did a very good job of facilitating the seminar. The JICC staff received and took care of the people in attendance, explaining well what the scholarship requirements entailed. Dr. Aboge and Ms. Njeri Kagema who were past beneficiaries of the scholarship, gave great presentations on life in Japan and their career experiences after they came back to Kenya.

of the applicants who attended the seminar also applied for the scholarship. The MEXT scholarship offers 4 categories in which you may apply. They include Research Student (Masters or PHD), Undergraduate Student, College of Technology Student (Higher Diploma) and Specialized Training College Student (Diploma).

Many applicants were pleased with the seminar and were thankful, because a lot of misinformation was clarified and the right information was given.

The 2021 MEXT scholarship applications will be announced during the month of April and May 2020 on our website and Facebook page. You are all welcome to apply when we make the announcements.

The MEXT Japanese Government scholarship, also known as Monbukagakusho, is offered every year by the Japanese Government. The Embassy of Japan held a seminar to inform interested young Kenyans on the requirements needed

The seminar was received very well as many

## Value Proposition in Japan-Africa Relations Kakehashi Africa

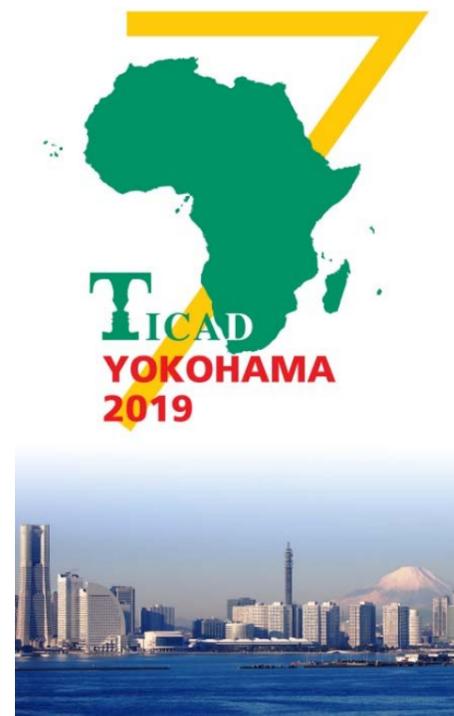


Sati Arthur, Chairperson, Kakehashi Africa

The resolution by TICAD V to promote human resource development in Africa through scholarship at Japan universities and internships in Japanese private enterprises has played an important role in the improvement of business relations between Japan and Africa. The beneficiaries of the Africa Business Education for Youth Initiative (commonly known as ABE Initiative) recognised this value and established a network of professionals to realise these aspirations.

As a bridge for a sustainable relationship, Kakehashi Africa is a platform that addresses the challenge of business navigation across Africa. The network is headquartered in Kenya. However, members are spread across the continent, have some form of experience and understanding of the business culture, both locally and in Japan, and have mid to high level professional experience. This makes it easier for Japanese enterprises to find reliable partners.

TICAD 7 Summit will be taking place in Yokohama, Japan in August 2019. Kakehashi Africa is honoured to host an official side event themed: **African Business Platform on the Move - Towards navigating more Japanese business to Africa**. Kakehashi Africa is on the move. It is a special occasion that our network intends to maximise in reaching out to those enterprises with interest in expanding their business to Africa. We intend to utilise this occasion to launch our portfolio by sharing the business cases already supported, challenges addressed and the ways in which we can make business happen between Japan and Africa.



TICAD 7 will focus on the following agenda on African development: (1) Economic transformation and improvements in business environment and institution through private investment and innovation (2) Promotion of resilient and sustainable society for human security (3) Peace and stability (support for Africa's own proactive efforts)

## My Experience in Japan as a MEXT Scholarship Student



Njeri Kagema, Chairperson, Japanese Language Teachers' Association of Kenya

I went to Japan as a MEXT scholarship student for my master's degree in 2013. Having attended the requirements that were necessary to apply for the 'Research Student', I also had an added advantage of level N2 of Japanese language proficiency. The application process was quite smooth and easy to follow. I qualified to do my Master's in Education at Akita University.

Getting to Japan; I was warmly welcomed at Akita University. I loved that the people of Akita were very accommodating, and the fact that there were other international students who were sponsored by MEXT which meant that I could also explore different cultures of the world through them.

My best part of the scholarship was that it was sufficient for me to have a peaceful time to study without worrying about school fees and living expenses because the university was paid directly by MEXT. All I needed to do was to study diligently and enjoy the goodness of Japan, and that I did, thanks to the monthly stipend that was always provided on schedule!

During my time as a student, I travelled across many regions of Japan. Some of my most relaxing moments were at the onsens (hot

springs) where I enjoyed hot natural baths, and would later get a Shiatsu massage! I visited so many onsens across Japan. And residing close to the Sea of Japan, I could get very fresh sea food. Apples too were in plenty. And the farmers markets were full of organic produce that is characteristic of Japan's very healthy food culture!

Japanese universities enable their students to explore their full potential. As a master's degree student, it is not mandatory to publish but the fact that I had a supervisor who motivated me to achieve my highest meant that I had to exploit the opportunities that were before me. Therefore, in addition to the thesis, I published in the TELES journal.

But life in Japan was not always smooth for me. In 2015, I had to be admitted at the Akita University hospital. Being unwell is an unfortunate thing, but this time it was a chance for me to experience Japan's medical care in a more holistic way. I was amazed at the level of precision with which patients are handled! Before any procedure was done on me, I had to say my name and birthday, even if my bed was clearly labelled with my details. Tests were extensively done to ensure a thorough diagnosis. The food I was given during every meal came with a written explanation of the ingredients, my allergies and even details as fine as how many grams of salt were used! The nurses were so kind and professional. And another very important factor in my getting well was that I was covered by the national health insurance which is very efficient.

I graduated in March 2016. In all the coursework and thesis, I attained A's. I'm glad I made use of the opportunities that were granted to me by MEXT. Looking back, I'm grateful that Japan moulded me academically, professionally and also character wise.

## Kenyan Innovators: Beware of the Misleading Examples of Bill Gates and Mark Zuckerberg



Victor Ngugi, an alumnus of the ABE Initiative, is an aspiring tech innovator.

first gained fame as the premier social media platform. And along with very many in my class, I was overwhelmed by the achievement of Mark Zuckerberg, in creating such a powerful innovation when still in his early 20s.

Of course, I then set out to copy him. Not just me. All my classmates who had an interest in innovation, wanted to be the Mark Zuckerberg of Kenya.

After college, I was fortunate enough to get a job. But my dreams of entrepreneurship still remained, and I set up a small digital company which I would apply myself to in the evenings.

However, with time I realized that I was not fully equipped to make great progress on the path I was determined to take. And by then I had a broader understanding of the tech sector. I knew for example that Larry Page and Sergey Brin co-founded Google while they were PhD students at Stanford University.

So not everyone had to be a Harvard University dropout (like Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg or Microsoft's Bill Gates before him) in order to be able to come up with transformational tech innovations.

I then started looking for opportunities for further education. It is this search that led me to apply for a place on the African Business Education Initiative for Youth run by the Japanese Government and generally known as the ABE Initiative.

This is a programme which has the double advantage of offering not only the opportunity to do a master's degree, but also an internship with a Japanese company which provides exposure in the many forms of advanced technology to be found in Japan.

In my case, following my successful application, I got the opportunity to study Information Technology at the Kobe Institute of Computing in Japan. There I enrolled for a Masters in Information Technology with a focus on ICT for development.

Most of the courses offered under the ABE Initiative are intended to achieve two things. First to serve as a bridge between Japan and Kenya, by exposing the scholars to Japanese technology, as well as Japanese culture. And, following from this, second, to enable the master's graduate to eventually set up their own businesses, of the same high standard as what they were exposed to in Japan, thus creating employment in Kenya.

In my case, I did a two-month internship at General Environmental Systems (GES) which specializes in water purification and thereafter worked there briefly before I returned

home.

Superficially, it would seem that I am still back where I was before I went to Japan – fully employed by day and working on my schemes for entrepreneurship and innovation in my own time.

But there is a huge difference. And this is where I think I have something important to tell all young Kenyans who aspire to a career in innovation and entrepreneurship.

I believe too many of us who aspire to create and innovate do not take the long-term view. They do not ask themselves, "What are the skills and tools that I must equip myself with, and the networks I must build up if I am to succeed at this?"

And so, they do not seek opportunities for further studies so that they may acquire greater technical skills.

My experience has taught me that young Kenyans who wish to innovate and to be tech entrepreneurs must take the long-term view and take the trouble to create a strong personal and technical foundation first, as an important step before working on a start-up.

It was at around the time when I was an undergraduate studying for a degree in Information Systems Technology at USIU (from 2008-2012) that Facebook



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## GGP

### What is GGP?

In 1989, the Government of Japan introduced Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) in order to respond to the diverse development needs in less developed countries. The aim of GGP is to provide financial assistance to non-profit development organisations for implementing projects at community level.

Every year, approximately 10 projects are selected.

### Who can apply for GGP?

Any non-profit development organisation such as:

- (1) Educational Institutions
- (2) Medical Institutions
- (3) Community-Based Organisations
- (4) Local & International NGOs
- (5) Faith-Based Organisations
- (6) Local Authority

### What are the areas of focus?

- (1) Primary Education (Priority for school assistance is given to primary schools)
- (2) Health Care including HIV/AIDS
- (3) Water and Sanitation
- (4) Environmental Protection
- (5) Poverty Reduction
- (6) Agriculture/Forestry/Fishery

## Handover Ceremony for the Project for the Development of Educational Infrastructure at Jubilee Secondary School



The Government of Japan has been providing funds to local non-profit organizations through the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) since 1989.

The official handover ceremony for the Project for the Development of Educational

Infrastructure at Jubilee Secondary School, under the GGP, was held at Londiani Sub-County, Kericho County, on 3rd April 2019.

Jubilee Secondary School was awarded a grant of USD 104,263 (approximately Kshs 10Million) for the construction of a laboratory, classrooms, and toilets and also installation of laboratory equipment and furniture.

Established in 2014, the school did not have school facilities except for three unfinished classrooms. The project has provided an essential learning environment for the students. Moreover, it is expected that the number of the dropouts will decrease and the students' performance in the exams will be improved in the future.

There is a primary school, which has more than 1,000 pupils that is located next to this secondary school. Therefore, the enrolment of the students will increase. This will encourage more pupils to continue with secondary education.

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