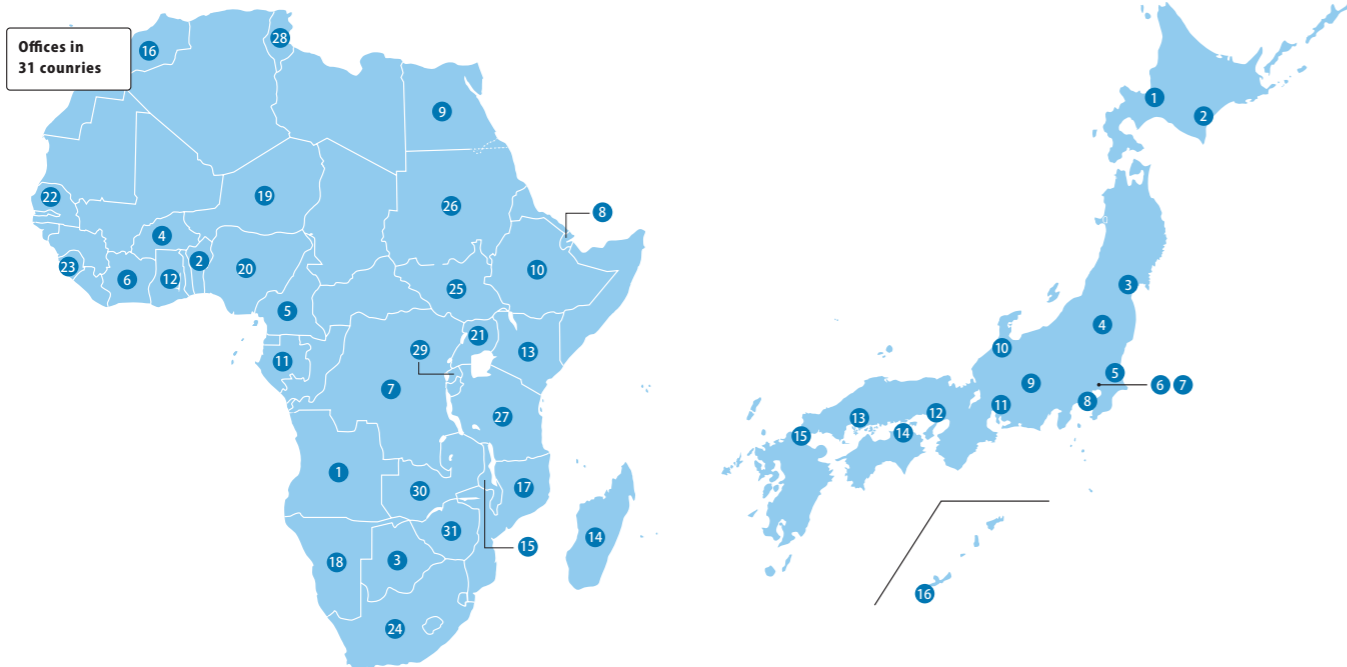


## JICA Offices



### Africa

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 1 Angola Office                           | 17 Mozambique Office   |
| 2 Benin Office                            | 18 Namibia Office      |
| 3 Botswana Office                         | 19 Niger Office        |
| 4 Burkina Faso Office                     | 20 Nigeria Office      |
| 5 Cameroon Office                         | 21 Rwanda Office       |
| 6 Cote d'Ivoire Office                    | 22 Senegal Office      |
| 7 Democratic Republic of the Congo Office | 23 Sierra Leone Office |
| 8 Djibouti Office                         | 24 South Africa Office |
| 9 Egypt Office                            | 25 South Sudan Office  |
| 10 Ethiopia Office                        | 26 Sudan Office        |
| 11 Gabon Office                           | 27 Tanzania Office     |
| 12 Ghana Office                           | 28 Tunisia Office      |
| 13 Kenya Office                           | 29 Uganda Office       |
| 14 Madagascar Office                      | 30 Zambia Office       |
| 15 Malawi Office                          | 31 Zimbabwe Office     |
| 16 Morocco Office                         |                        |

### Domestic

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Hokkaido Center (Sapporo)  | 9 Komagane Training Center |
| 2 Hokkaido Center (Obihiro)  | 10 Hokuriku Center         |
| 3 Tohoku Center              | 11 Chubu Center            |
| 4 Nihonmatsu Training Center | 12 Kansai Center           |
| 5 Tsukuba Center             | 13 Chugoku Center          |
| 6 Tokyo Center               | 14 Shikoku Center          |
| 7 JICA Global Plaza          | 15 Kyushu Center           |
| 8 Yokohama Center            | 16 Okinawa Center          |



For more details on the ABE Initiative, please visit  
The ABE Initiative on JICA website  
<https://www.jica.go.jp/africahiroba/business/detail/03/index.html>



For details on JICA office locations, please visit  
Domestic and Overseas Offices on JICA website  
<https://www.jica.go.jp/about/structure/index.html>



For more details on Africa, please visit  
Africa Plaza on JICA website  
<https://www.jica.go.jp/africahiroba/>

## Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Africa Department

Nibancho Center Building, 5-25 Niban-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-8012, Japan  
TEL: +81 3 5226 8208 Email: [abe2@jica.go.jp](mailto:abe2@jica.go.jp)  
<http://www.jica.go.jp/>

Feb. 2024



Development of  
Industrial Human Resources in Africa

# ABE Initiative



African  
Business  
Education  
Initiative  
for Youth



# What is the ABE Initiative?



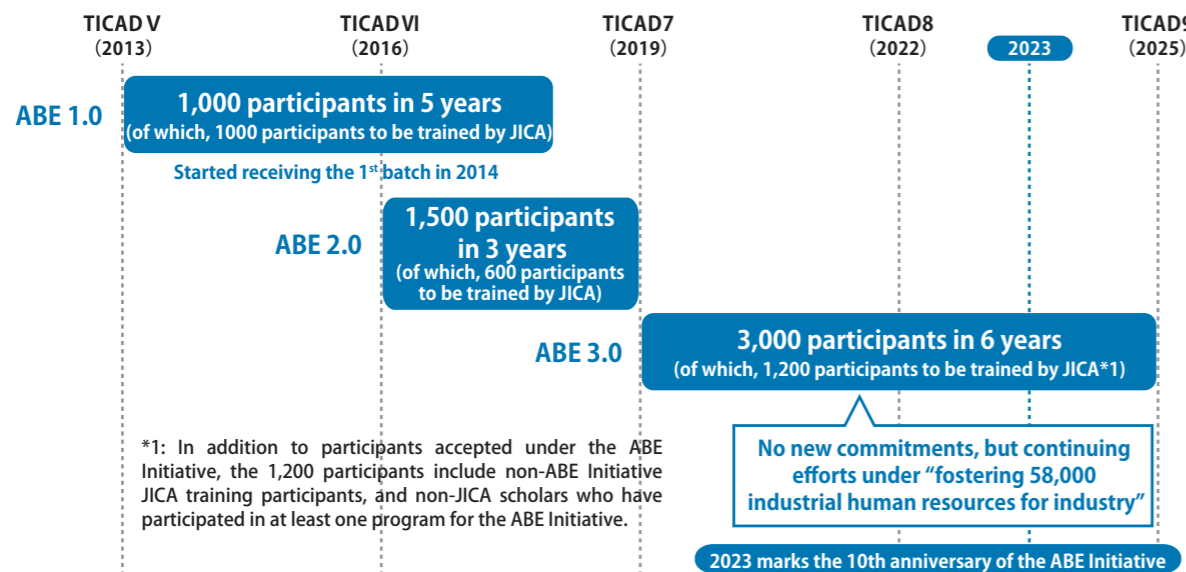
The ABE Initiative (Master's Degree and Internship Program of African Business Education Initiative for Youth) is a long-term training program aiming to develop African industrial human resources and foster young personnel who will become the bridge between the business in Africa and Japan. This program offers opportunities for African youth to study at master's courses in Japanese universities, interact with Japanese companies, learn business through experiencing internships at Japanese companies and organizations.

The ABE Initiative was launched by the Government of Japan at the 5th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V), held in Yokohama in 2013. At TICAD VI, held in Kenya in 2016, continuation of the program as the "ABE Initiative 2.0" was announced. During TICAD VII held in Yokohama in 2019, the "ABE Initiative 3.0" was announced, with the main pillars of strengthening the strategic nature of the selection process, expanding and enhancing program content, and expanding participation in some programs beyond the ABE Initiative participants. At TICAD VIII held in Tunisia in 2022, the ABE Initiative 3.0 was announced to be continuously implemented as an initiative for the development of industrial human resources.

In September 2014, the first ABE Initiative participants arrived in Japan. The program, which started with 156 participants from eight countries, has received 1,776 participants from all African countries by December 2023, of which 1,346 participants successfully completed the program and returned their home, playing an active role in various fields.

Objectives	Approaches	Main Targets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To foster human resources for industry and business that would be the key to growth of Africa</li> <li>To foster human resources that will connect and become the bridge between Japanese and African businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide opportunities to obtain a master's degree and experience internship at companies, as part of a joint program of the Japanese government and business community</li> <li>To foster personnel with a deep understanding of Japanese society and corporate culture, equipped with practical business skills that are uniquely Japanese, all acquired through this long-term training program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Private sector: Those who have experience in economic activities in the local private sectors and wish to contribute to Africa's development through cultivating strong network with Japanese companies.</li> <li>Government officials (involved in fields of interest of Japanese companies): individuals who are involved in planning and implementation of industrial policies and are motivated to contribute to the development of Africa through government activities.</li> </ul>

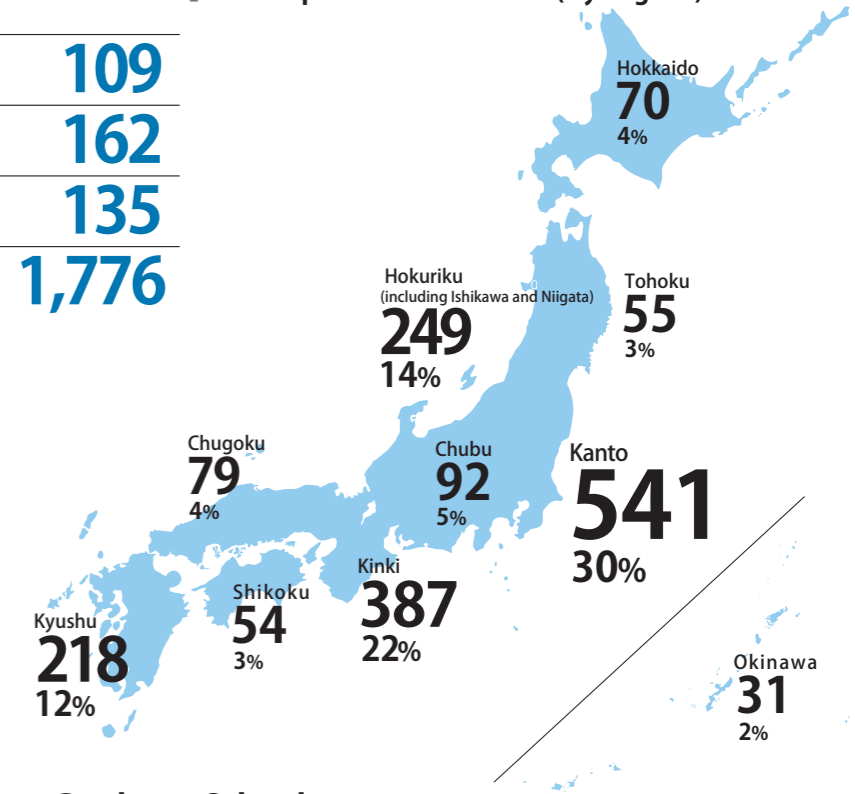
## ABE Initiative: Historical Transition



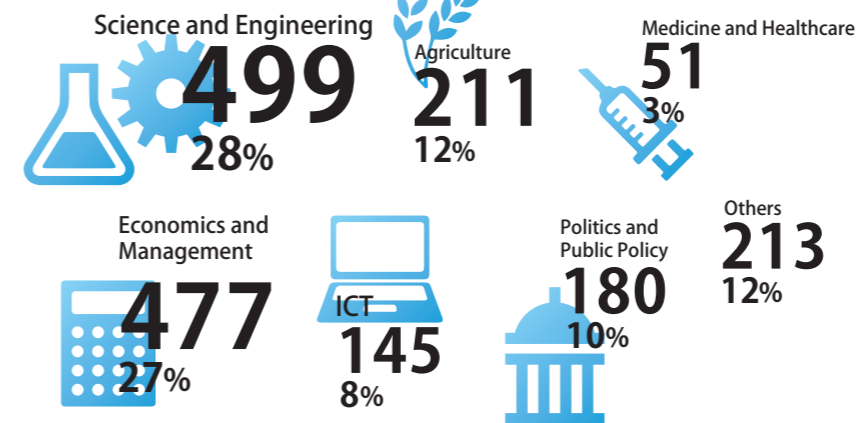
## Number of Participants

1st batch September 2014	156	8th batch September 2021	109
2nd batch September 2015	317	9th batch September 2022	162
3rd batch September 2016	348	10th batch September 2023	135
4th batch September 2017	279	Total	1,776
5th batch September 2018	119		
6th batch September 2019	66		
7th batch September 2020	85		

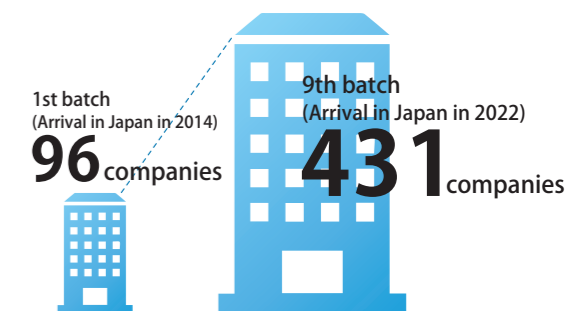
## Location of Graduate School in which Participants are Enrolled (by region)



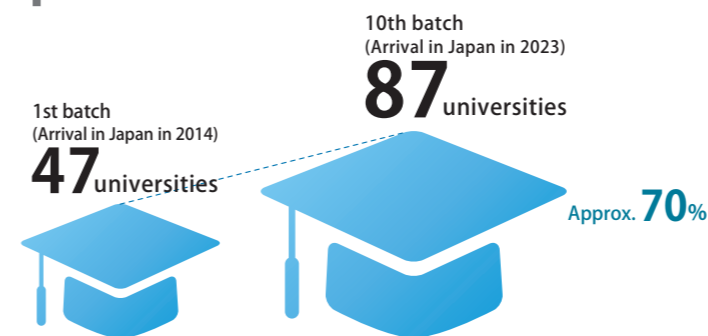
## Participants' Major Field of Study at Graduate School



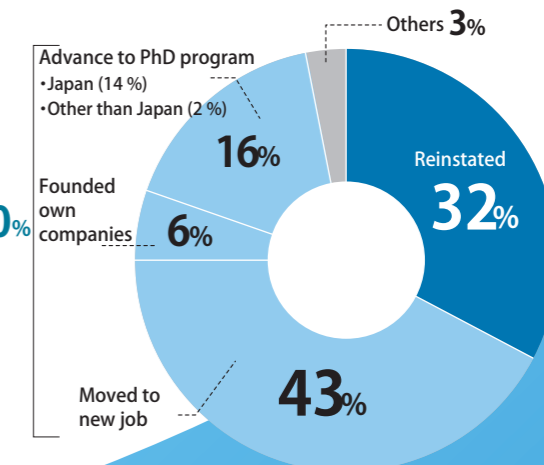
## Number of Internship Host Companies



## Number of Cooperating Universities



## Participants' Career After Return to Home Country



\* According to a survey conducted in August 2022, around 50% of ABE Initiative graduates have ties to Japanese companies and approximately 80% have ties to Japan.

# Program Overview

## Activities in Japan | (Internships, business programs, and more)

### Internships (Summer, Post-Graduation)



An internship at a company in Shiga Prefecture

- A summer internship at Japanese companies and other organizations in Japan is offered to all participants.
- A post-graduation internship will be implemented, if a participant receives an offer from a company.

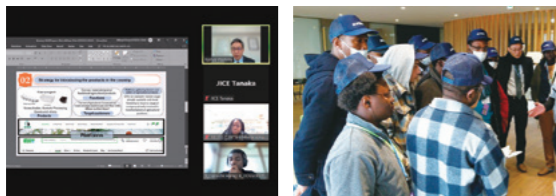
### Networking events with Japanese companies



A networking event (October 2023)

- Provides opportunities for companies and participants to interact with each other four times a year.

### Business skill trainings / trainings on traditional Japanese business management



A business skill training (April 2023)

A training for understanding Japanese companies (February 2024)

- Provides trainings to acquire basic business knowledge.
- Also provides trainings to gain better understandings of Japanese companies via study tours, etc., in cooperation with the Association for Overseas Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Partnerships (AOTS).

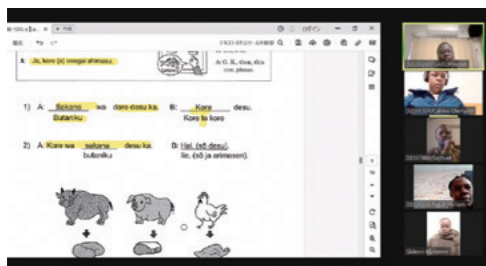
### Networking between participants



An orientation event in October 2023

- In addition to the orientation session upon participants' arrival in Japan, ABE Initiative participants nationwide are provided an opportunity to interact with other African participants once a year. During these sessions, introduction of Japan's support for industrial development and private sector partnership projects in Africa and lectures on entrepreneurship are also conducted.

### Japanese language trainings



- Provides opportunities to learn basic Japanese for participants who do not have opportunities to learn Japanese at their enrolled universities.

## Program Overview

JICA Japanese university Japanese companies

### 《 Before arrival in Japan 》

Approx. 3 months Application

Approx. 6 months Selection process  
• Document screening • Interview

Approx. 6 months Selection process  
• Document screening • Interview

### 《 Arrival in Japan 》

1 yr - 2.5 yrs Master's Degree Program  
Engineering, Economics and Business Administration, Agricultural Science, Mathematics and Physics Sciences, Commerce, Tourism etc.

Business program

Summer Internship

2 weeks - 6 months (after graduation) Post-graduation Internship 《 Departure for home country 》

### 《 Departure for home country 》

After returning home Follow-up  
• Reporting session in home country  
• Networking Fair in Africa  
• Monitoring etc.

Collaboration & Business development

### Business Program

A general term for additional programs, such as business skill trainings, offered to ABE Initiative participants during their stay in Japan.

### Summer Internship

For all participants. Duration is from 1 week to 1 month and takes place during the summer break of the first year.

### Post-Graduation Internship

Only for participants who have received consent from receiving company and organization, for a period of up to six months after the completion of the master's degree program.

## Follow-up

### Reporting session/networking fair

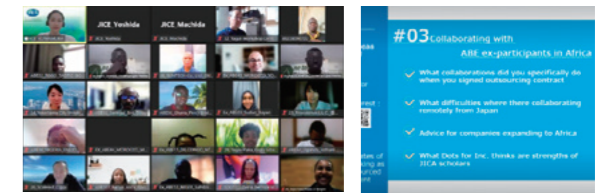
- Events are held for past graduates and Japanese company representatives etc., to coincide with the return of graduates and departure of new participants.



An event in Egypt in FY 2022

### Support for building relationships with Japanese companies

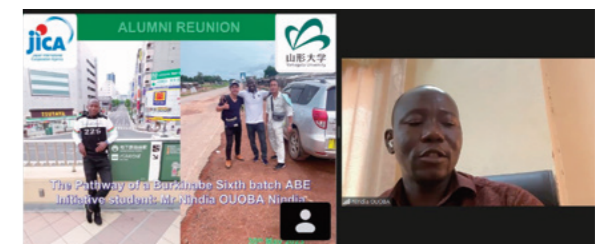
- Provides advice and useful information to ABE Initiative graduates on how to find employment at Japanese companies and organizations in Japan, organizes online exchange meetings with Japanese companies.



An online exchange meeting (July 2023)

### Cross-border networking

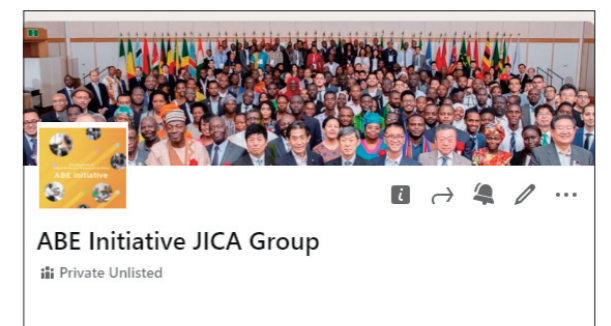
- In an effort to maintain and strengthen horizontal relationships across countries, wide-area networking events are organized for all ABE Initiative graduates. These events provide an opportunity for networking among graduates by showcasing good practices of ABE Initiative graduates and Japanese companies.



A wide-area networking event (May 2023)

### Staying connected through SNS

- In 2020, an online group (LinkedIn) was created for participants and graduates of the ABE Initiative.
- Japanese companies and JOCV interested in African business have also joined the group, which has approximately 1,170 members (as of December 2023).



ABE Initiative JICA Group  
Private Unlisted

# Active ABE Initiative graduates

## Helping to connect Japan and Tunisia as an engineer



Ms. Guizani Amani



Tunisia

Batch	6 <sup>th</sup> batch (arrived in Autumn 2019)
Studied at	School of Engineering The University of Tokyo
Interned at	Kani Construction Co., Ltd., Softbank Corp.
Organization at time of application	Mecater Ingenierie (local private company)
Current workplace	Yachiyo Engineering Co., Ltd.



An internship at Softbank



Involved in a project in Tunisia at Yachiyo Engineering

### Before Arriving in Japan

#### Interested in the high-level technology of Japan

I worked as a geotechnical engineer in a consultancy firm based in Tunisia that deals with mining infrastructure. I was interested in earthquakes, and since Japan's technology and research in the field of earthquake mitigation is progressive, I wished to come to Japan and learn.

### About training in Japan

#### Getting in touch with business through the internship

At my university, I was astounded to meet and be lectured by the authors that I had referred to in the papers back in Tunisia. Having the best support from my supervisor and senior students, I was able to carry out my research in the best conditions.

I conducted my post-graduation internship at a major IT company. Despite having no experience in business development, I was given the responsibility to oversee the business development of an overseas project and report the progress back to other team leaders, which was thrilling for me. It was a very challenging but enjoyable experience.

### After finishing the program

#### Linking Japan to Tunisia, and all around the world through engineering

Thanks to my thrilling experience during my internship, I developed a strong interest in discovering the Japanese working environment, ethics and ways, so I decided to work in Japan. At Yachiyo Engineering, I work on various international projects, including a project that aims to implement Japanese technologies in road maintenance in Tunisia. I hope to continue to keep linking Japan to Tunisia, to Africa, and to countries all around the world.

## Conducting activities to connect Japan and Madagascar



Ms. Juvencia Deschamps Ralay Harisoa



Madagascar

Batch	3 <sup>th</sup> batch (arrived in Autumn 2016)
Studied at	Nagoya University of Commerce & Business Business School
Interned at	Otofu Factory Ishikawa Co., Ltd.
Organization at time of application	Galana Distribution Petroliere (local private company)
Current workplace	Economic Development Board of Madagascar



Participating in an internship (front right)



Involved in attracting direct investment to Madagascar

### Before Arriving in Japan

#### Coming to Japan to learn more about Kaizen

Graduated with a master's in marketing and strategy, I worked in various industry and business areas in Madagascar for about 10 years. In my very last position, I was responsible of continuous improvement in a complex and very technical area, where I had to teach myself about Kaizen. ABE Initiative offered me the opportunity to learn more about it.

### About training in Japan

#### Experiencing the business side of Japan

I was able to visit leading Japanese companies, such as Toyota; and discovered the business culture of Japan, like the "Keiretsu" concept. I was able to shape my leadership skills through various business cases taught at NUCB.

### After finishing the program

#### Dedicated to be a "Leader"

After my graduation, I joined a Japanese company. Afterwards, feeling the importance of giving back to the community, I taught at universities in Madagascar. I shared my experiences in Japan with my students while teaching them about Japanese philosophy, such as Kaizen and Omotenashi. I started two companies as well; one a business consulting company for Japanese companies looking to expand to Madagascar, and the other, an e-market that showcase authentic products of Madagascar. Recently, I became the Director of Communications and Corporate relations, of EDB Madagascar (Economic Development Board of Madagascar), the national investment promotion agency of Madagascar, promoting investment opportunities and attracting foreign direct investment, including Japanese investors.

## Dreaming of expanding laundromats to Mozambique and throughout Africa



Mr. Sergio Elidio Morais



Mozambique

Batch	8 <sup>th</sup> batch (arrived in Autumn 2021)
Studied at	International University of Japan Graduate School of International Relations
Interned at	Fujita Corporation Assentia Holdings Inc.
Organization at time of application	Unique Clothes (own business) Cle Enterprise (local private company)
Current workplace	Unique Clothes (own business) Cle Enterprise (local private company)



Mr. Morais discussing with Japanese business persons



Striving to expand laundromats in Africa

### Before Arriving in Japan

#### Always feeling a sense of familiarity to Japan

As part of my job, I traveled overseas a lot, and I became interested in learning about other countries and obtaining an international perspective in things. I had always felt a sense of familiarity towards Japan, with experiences reading Japanese Manga and having a school built by Japan in front of my house. So, when the opportunity came to learn in Japan, I seized that opportunity.

### About training in Japan

#### Meeting coin laundromats in Japan

After seeing the laundromats everywhere during my time in Japan, it really gave me the conviction that laundromats, while still unusual in Africa, can be spread throughout Africa. I contacted Assentia Holdings, a company that helps Japanese businesses to expand their franchise globally, with the idea of expanding self-serving laundromats in Africa, which led to my internship with them. Assentia Holdings introduced me to different Japanese laundromat manufacturers, and taught me the various ways of business.

### After finishing the program

#### Using the network of the ABE Initiative graduates to expand the franchise to all over Africa

Currently, I am back in Mozambique, working in the project to expand laundromats into Africa in collaboration with Assentia Holdings, and different Japanese laundromat manufacturers. We will be opening our first store soon, in Mozambique. Wearing clean clothes will encourage people to stay healthy. Also, people would be able to spend the time that they had used to hand wash their clothes to do other things, such as continuing their education.

I am aiming to expand the laundromats to other African countries by using the network of ABE Initiative graduates.

## Helping various Japanese companies in the agricultural sector from a government standpoint



Mr. Paul Ayella



Uganda

Batch	3 <sup>th</sup> batch (arrived in Autumn 2016)
Studied at	School of Life and Environmental Science University of Tsukuba
Interned at	NTC International Co., Ltd.
Organization at time of application	Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries
Current workplace	Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries



Supporting business activities of a Japanese company in Uganda



Interacting with other international students

### Before Arriving in Japan

#### Sought to learn Japanese irrigation technology

I had previously worked with Japanese companies and experts for irrigation projects in Uganda, and I came to Japan because I wanted to learn more about the Japanese advanced irrigation technologies. I was also curious about learning the Japanese culture and the work philosophy that led to their steady economic development.

### About training in Japan

#### Devoted to academic research and networking

In Japan, I majored in irrigation water management. Due to my research publication, I was awarded as one of the best students in the Laboratory of Water Resources and Environmental Engineering. Aside from my research at the university, I made efforts to make various contacts with Japanese companies, including startup companies, during my stay. One such company, Sanyo Consultant, is now working with me in Uganda.

### After finishing the program

#### Aiming to collaborate with Japanese companies in the agricultural sector

To deepen my expertise in irrigation water management further, I decided to enroll for a PhD at Tsukuba University. After my graduation, I went back to MAAIF-Uganda, to further promote sustainable irrigation development in Uganda. I helped a Japanese company sign a MoU with a university in Uganda, and I established its Ugandan branch, which I represent myself. I also give information to several Japanese companies about business opportunities in Uganda. I am open to helping and supporting any Japanese company intending to enter the Ugandan and African markets in agricultural development.

# Japanese companies collaborating with the ABE Initiative



## Rakuten Group, Inc.

### Information

- ©Corporate Name: Rakuten Group, Inc.
- ©Office Location: Setagaya-ku, Tokyo
- ©Business Area: Services (Internet services)
- ©Total number of interns received: 4
- ©Corporate Website: <https://corp.rakuten.co.jp/>

As part of a comprehensive partnership agreement we concluded with JICA in 2021, Rakuten Group started receiving participants from the ABE Initiative as interns. The internships have provided many opportunities for interaction with our employees and has helped improve our employees' motivation to make social contributions and train younger employees.

Other collaborative activities with the ABE Initiative participants include mentoring support (Note 1) for the start-up business development of an ABE Initiative graduate from Ghana (arrived in Japan in 2018) who won a prize in the pitch contest in JICA's Project NINJA (Next innovation with Japan) (Note 2).

At Rakuten Group, we strive to achieve a sustainable society through innovation by contributing to achieving SDGs via various business activities and cooperating with

diverse stakeholders.

(Note 1) A seminar report: Startups in Africa – the grand final of the NINJA business plan competition, news and media – JICA

(Note 2) Project NINJA (Next Innovation with Japan) aims to support entrepreneurs to create business innovation in JICA's partner countries by conducting corporate awareness activities, making policy recommendations, and strengthening corporate management capacity.

[https://www.jica.go.jp/information/seminar/2020/20210226\\_01.html](https://www.jica.go.jp/information/seminar/2020/20210226_01.html)



Interns and our employees



## Hinode Sangyo Co., Ltd.

### Information

- ©Corporate Name: Hinode Sangyo Co., Ltd.
- ©Office Location: Yokohama, Kanagawa
- ©Business Area: Manufacturing and wholesale business (effluent-treatment chemicals, design, construction management and maintenance of effluent-treatment facilities)
- ©Total number of interns received: 56
- ©Corporate Website: <https://www.hinodesangyo.com>

After exhibiting a booth at the TICAD V held in Yokohama, we saw the potential for business in Africa, and decide to receive interns. To date, we have received more than 50 interns from about 20 countries.

We ask our interns to see our products in use in the field and identify how they can be used to solve water treatment challenges in their countries, as well as identify issues we face in our overseas business development.

Receiving interns has made a significant difference in our overseas business development. We have employed two ABE Initiative interns from Senegal and Morocco as full-time staff and will soon hire another participant from Benin. The hiring of the



Hiring ABE Initiative participants led to our business development in Africa.

Moroccan participant led to our first business in Morocco. Other activities through the interns have led to the conclusion of Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) with companies in South Africa and Senegal, information exchange and joint research with Japanese universities, and product development for developing countries with a focus on cost reduction, while maintaining quality.



## DIVIC Corp.

### Information

- ©Corporate Name: DIVIC Corp.
- ©Office Location: Yokohama, Kanagawa
- ©Business Area: Contracted software development (human resource development and education services)
- ©Total number of interns received: 64
- ©Corporate Website: <https://divintocode.jp/>

DIVIC is a company that was able to expand into Africa thanks to the ABE Initiative. Since 2018, we have been receiving over 60 ABE Initiative participants as interns. Initially, we asked them to help mainly with the translation of teaching materials into English, but later they took on mentoring works to teach programming in Coding Bootcamps in African countries where we have started our new businesses. Currently, we have ABE Initiative graduates who work with us as business partners in Burkina Faso, Mali, Ghana, and other countries. We expect them to create strategies on business expansion, find local partners, coordinate with governments, schools, and companies, and find people that will follow-up on business meetings.

We find people in Africa

to have relatively high ability and feel that Africa has high potential. We see the ABE Initiative as an important infrastructure that will solidly connect people to people in Japan and Africa. Connections are the beginning of business, and people can deepen their relationships regardless of nationality or language as long as they are trustworthy.



ABE Initiative graduates have become our business partners



## Tsuji Plastics Co., Ltd.

### Information

- ©Corporate Name: Tsuji Plastics Co., Ltd.
- ©Office Location: Higashiomi, Shiga
- ©Business Area: Manufacturing (injection molding of thermoplastic resin, design and manufacture of safety fences with aluminum frames, solar applications (self-luminous road studs, self-luminous tiles))
- ©Total number of interns received: 18
- ©Corporate Website: <https://www.tsuji-pla.co.jp/>

The ABE Initiative has been the key in building our relationship with Africa. During TICAD VI held in Kenya in 2016, we recognized the need for our products in Africa, and since then, we started receiving interns.

In our internships, we not only teach participants about our products and learn about local markets from them, but we also cultivate business partners who can be trusted to develop business in local markets. During the summer internship, we explain the features of our products and past projects. Participants, who can be potential partners in the future, are given in-depth training in product assembly and operation during the post-graduation internship.

ABE Initiative graduates from Senegal, Niger, and South Sudan that have experienced internships have established local companies in their home countries and have become strong partners in developing our business there. All

participants of our post-graduation internships are now active business partners, and it is not too much to say that without the ABE Initiative, we would not have been able to create local partnerships in Africa.



A post-graduation internship

# Japanese universities accepting ABE Initiative participants

## Activities embodying the objectives of the ABE Initiative are underway on campus



International University of Japan

**Information**

- Location: Minamiuonuma City, Niigata Prefecture
- Major Graduate Programs: Graduate School of International Relations, Graduate School of International Management
- Total number of participants received: 201 (as of December 2023)
- <https://www.iuj.ac.jp/>

International University of Japan has actively received African students since 2014 when the ABE Initiative was first launched. Accordingly, the African student community, including ABE Initiative participants, is second in size only to the Asian community.

We have the IUJ Entrepreneurship Club, founded by an ABE Initiative participant from Nigeria who arrived in Japan in 2022, which aims to hone entrepreneurial skills while studying in Japan, connect them with people and resources in Japan and in the Minamiuonuma region, IUJ's host community, and become the bridge between Japan and Africa. The club actively engages in activities that connect Japan and Africa through business, which is the basic philosophy of the

ABE Initiative, such as inviting faculty members from our business school and entrepreneurs to give lectures, as well as organizing business competitions.



A Nigerian participant who founded the "IUJ Entrepreneurship Club"

## Meeting a diverse Africa through the ABE Initiative



The University of Tokyo

**Information**

- Location: Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo
- Major Graduate Programs: Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Science, School of Engineering, Graduate School of Public Policy, etc., Graduate School of Frontier Sciences, etc.
- Total number of participants received: 25 (as of December 2023)
- <https://www.u-tokyo.ac.jp/ja/index.html>

Africa has more than 50 different countries, with even more diversity than the number of countries. Thanks to the ABE Initiative, the Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences has welcomed students from African countries we have never received before. This has not only promoted our understanding of Africa, but has also increased the diversity of our graduate students and contributed to improving the quality of education and research.

Participants who have studied with us are now active in their home countries, taking advantage of the latest academic knowledge and the personal networks they have built both inside and outside the university. One participant has started his own business in Ghana. We are increasingly interested in foster-

ing "entrepreneurs" in Africa and expect that more and more ABE Initiative participants will start their own businesses in their home countries, and more Japanese will use their connections with participants to start businesses in Africa.



In Japan, participants graduate gain better understandings of Japanese culture and history, build a network with Japanese people, as well as dedicate themselves to their research in the master's program.

## Co-creation between Japan and Africa through learning about solutions of social issues using ICT



Kobe Institute of Computing

**Information**

- Location: Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture
- Major Graduate Programs: Graduate School of Information Technology
- Total number of participants received: 126 (as of December 2023)
- <https://www.kic.ac.jp/>

In 2013, we established the ICT Innovator Course, a Master's degree program conducted in English, with the aim of connecting the momentum of growth in developing countries to the revitalization of Kobe, Hyogo, and Japan. We have received many ABE Initiative participants through this course.

Participants learn ICT and our unique problem-solving method, "Research and Practice," to create practical methods that contribute to solving social issues on a daily basis. Moreover, good collaborations between participants and Japanese students have emerged, such as ABE Initiative participants advising Japanese students on their research activities in Africa, and cooperating with Japanese entrepreneurs in Africa.

In addition, participants have actively contributed to our JICA Partnership Program (Note 1), Kobe City sponsored events (Note 2), and the "ABEKOBE Initiative (tentative name)," a collaboration between industry, government, academia and community, that links Japan and Africa.

(Note 1) Kobe-Kigali ICT Business Initiative  
(Note 2) African Month in Kobe



Participants learn problem-solving methods with other students in a culturally diverse environment.

## Contributing to the revitalization of local universities and cross-cultural exchanges with local residents



Ashikaga University

**Information**

- Location: Ashikaga City, Tochigi Prefecture
- Major Graduate Programs: Graduate School of Engineering
- Total number of participants received: 45 (as of December 2023)
- <https://ashikaga.ac.jp/>

Ashikaga University started receiving ABE Initiative participants after becoming involved in a JICA project in Kenya (Note 1). The participants are actively connecting with the local community through participating in local summer festivals and taiko drum performances in the municipality, participating in local karate classes, and giving lectures at local high schools. They are highly appreciated by the local community. In addition, when Ashikaga University won the "Nihon Ryugaku AWARDS", the Ambassadors of African countries to Japan were invited to the celebration party, and the "AU African All Stars," a club formed by ABE Initiative participants who love music, performed a dance.

On the academic side, participants also

participate actively in academic conferences, and one participant received a special award at an academic conference in South Korea. The ABE Initiative is contributing to the revitalization of research and education at universities in local cities and to the cross-cultural exchanges with local residents.

(Note 1) BRIGHT Project



The "AU African All-Stars" has become a tradition at Ashikaga University.

## Takehashi Africa, an organization founded by ABE Initiative participants

ABE Initiative participants have been active in many fields during and after the program. Some of them have taken over the objectives of the ABE Initiative and established various organizations and non-profit organizations (NPOs) by themselves to strengthen the relationship between Japan and Africa. One such organization is Takehashi Africa.

It was founded by ABE Initiative 2nd batch participants who were enrolled in universities in the Kansai region at that time of 2016. With the vision of "building a bridge between the Japanese

and African markets for the sustainable development of Japanese and African societies," Takehashi Africa conducts various activities to contribute to strengthening Japan-Africa relations by connecting Japanese and African companies, researchers, entrepreneurs, and others. In addition to conducting market research commissioned by Japanese companies, introducing human resources to Japanese companies, planning and implementing startup incubation programs in collaboration with Japanese investors, they also serve as lecturers at various events held by JICA for current ABE Initiative participants, and through

this, they are involved in the training of ABE Initiative participants.

Currently, approximately 1,600 people are members of Takehashi Africa, of which about 2/3 are graduates of the ABE Initiative. In addition, other JICA training participants and former government-sponsored international students interested in Japan are also members of this organization.

Takehashi Africa's teams cover more than 48 African countries and Japan, working daily to become a "bridge" between Japan and Africa.



Mr. Aliyu of Takehashi Africa speaking at the Orientation Program in October 2023



The website of Takehashi Africa (<https://www.takehashiafrica.com/>)