

JICA Networking Fair in Autumn successfully held in Kobe



On October 4th, 2024, the JICA Networking Fair was held at Kobe Sambo Hall, attracting 76 Japanese companies keen to explore business opportunities and foster international partnerships with JICA. A total of 238 JICA scholars from 57 countries, currently enrolled in graduate programs across Japan, participated in the event. This year saw a notable increase in the number of new companies and organizations, which doubled compared to previous years, significantly enriching the event and broadening the scope of potential connections for the scholars.

The fair featured a seminar in which three JICA scholars shared their experiences from summer internships with Japanese companies, offering valuable insights into the skills and knowledge gained. Representatives from two host companies in Hyogo Prefecture—[OTOWA ELECTRIC Co., Ltd.](#) and [TOA Corporation](#)—also contributed, providing a comprehensive view of the internship experience from both the scholar and company perspectives.

The seminar was followed by a lively Q&A session. At the business booths, several Japanese companies—some attending for the first time—expressed strong interest in connecting with young professionals from Africa and other regions. These companies emphasized that the event's greatest value lay in the opportunity for direct, face-to-face interactions with JICA scholars, which facilitated more meaningful connections and potential future collaborations.

Invaluable Guidance from Experienced Summer Interns

We reached out to JICA scholars who have navigated the internship landscape successfully to gather their vibrant advice for your journey. It is clear that embracing an active mindset—rather than remaining passive—can make a world of difference. Even small contributions can significantly enrich your experience and lead to greater success during your internship adventure!



Mr. BELEGCHOUR Hamza
ABE 10th Batch, Moroccan,
Kwansei Gakuin University
Interned
at **TOA Corporation**

Overall impressions of Mr. BELEGCHOUR's internship experience and key discoveries:

Many foreigners perceive Japanese people as solely hardworking, but he found them to have a relaxed vibe and a deep passion for their work. Observing their approach, he adopted the same attitude. They treated interns with great respect and were generally very friendly.

How he got an internship opportunity at such a well-matched company:

In fact, JICA networking fair was the place he met with this company. By talking in-person at the networking fair's booth, he found the passion and philosophy of the company would match him. His strategy to make that fair meaningful was to stand out from others, adapt the topic with each company's needs and interest based on his pre-research of companies.

Advice for future interns:

- Embrace your passion for your work, and it will transform from a job into a hobby.
- Never hesitate to ask questions!
- Respect Japanese culture, even if it differs from your own. Demonstrating respect will encourage mutual respect in return.

Ms. MALOPE was very satisfied with gaining extensive new knowledge in a new field, learning about Japanese work ethics, and forming friendships. Each day followed a precise schedule, encompassing phases of learning about products and materials, visiting sites such as factories, and independently testing and creating one of their products. Language barriers were minimal, except within the factory compounds.

How to Make an Internship Meaningful:

Step outside your comfort zone and explore areas beyond your specialization; this will broaden your perspective. For instance, although her major was chemical engineering, her internship in a different field allowed her to learn a wealth of new things, making it a highly beneficial experience.

Before embarking on an internship:

In her case, once she was offered the internship, she first researched the company where she would be interning, gathered data on how its competitors were performing in her home country, and investigated how to access relevant information. She then submitted this research before starting the internship and looked for ways she could contribute, making a concerted effort to add value.

Advice for future interns:

- Embrace curiosity and don't hesitate to ask questions. They can ignite new ideas and help others grasp the challenges you're encountering. Effective communication is essential, so be proactive rather than waiting.
- Utilize your free time after work to connect with your colleagues. Engaging in discussions about your interests, country, and culture can foster meaningful conversations and mutually beneficial relationships.



Ms. MALOPE Nosipho Lindelwa

ABE 10th Batch,
South African,
Nagoya University
of Commerce &
Business
Interned at
**OTOWA ELECTRIC
CO., LTD.**

Internship at Public Sectors: *the case in Yokoze town, Saitama*

While most of the internship opportunities are with private sectors in Japan, we also work on internship at public sectors including Ministries and local municipalities for SDGs Global Leaders Course participants. This time, we were finally able to find a local government that would accept JICA Scholars' internship, which was **Yokoze town** in Saitama prefecture.



For the program details, [click here](#) !



Yokoze is a small but unique municipality that calls themselves “the most supportive town for innovators in Japan” and has launched “**YokoLab**,” a platform for public-private partnership projects, taking advantage of its prompt and decision-making that only a small-sized administration can offer.

Four JICA scholars from Pacific and Indian Ocean Island countries, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Mauritius, and Seychelles, took part in the three-day program where they interacted with the passionate town hall officials and learned and experienced how they have been trying to revitalize this town that are isolated yet full of potentials.

The situation **Yokoze** has been put under is similar to countries where the four participants are from; they are small-populated and limited with resources yet embraces beautiful nature and potentials to attract private sectors' investment in various ways.

Throughout the program we found that development issues in provincial areas in Japan have so much in common with those in developing countries. We hope that more local government follow to join this program seeking solutions for rural development, being sure of JICA Scholars' great contribution in this arena.

CONTACT



If you have any comments, suggestions, or ideas, please contact us!
We welcome anyone who would like to share their stories or pictures from Japan.
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