



NEWSLETTER



Shared Experiences, Shared Strength

On 14 March 2026, Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers partnered with one of JICA's counterpart organisation, Young Achievement Sports for Development, to host an empowering sports event at Hatcliffe 3 Primary School. The event, JAR4Women, placed spotlight on Justice, Rights, and Action for women and girls, joining the global celebration of the International Women's Day and Women's Month

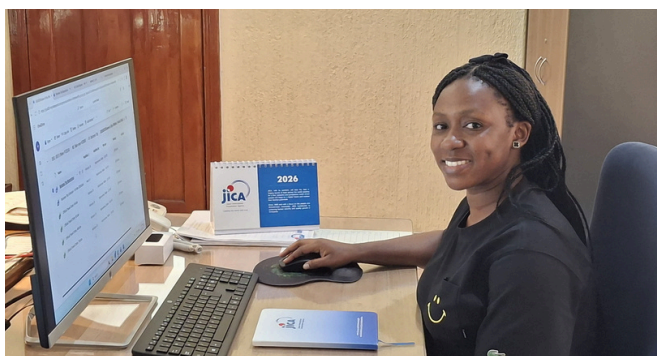
Around 100 participants engaged in open discussions about gender-based violence and everyday behaviours that contribute to violence within communities.. After the dialogue, everyone enjoyed some exciting sporting games, fostering teamwork, laughter, and connection.

The afternoon was filled with vibrant interactions as JOCVs connected with the women and girls, exchanging experiences and exploring solutions to common challenges faced by women globally.

● Team Spotlight

In celebration of the International Women's Month, JICA Zimbabwe proudly recognized Ms. Mabel Nyamurowa, a dedicated Program Officer for the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) Program. Every day, Ms. Nyamurowa eagerly champions women's empowerment and contributes to building fair, inclusive societies.

Through her work, she continues to strengthen collaboration with our partners to deliver greater impact, supporting volunteers, and ensuring that volunteer requests from partners include gender and development considerations.





Strengthening the Startup Ecosystem

JICA, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, and the Great Zambezi Initiative, (GZI) co-organized the Zimbabwe Startup Ecosystem Harmonization Sprint, held on March 6, 2026.

Key players from across the innovation landscape came together to reflect on how best to support and strengthen the startup ecosystem. Discussions focused on making startups investor-ready, technology-ready, customer-ready, and business-ready, understanding the roles of different actors in the startup journey, and identifying the competences entrepreneurs need to meaningfully contribute to the economy.

The sprint successfully met its core objective of charting a clear way forward to help student-led ventures transition from academic laboratories to the global marketplace.



The Zimbabwe Startup Ecosystem Harmonization Sprint



5S-KAIZEN-TQM Project makes definitive milestones

As the project heads out to a conclusion in May 2026, read on the project's activities in improving health services, best practices, and solutions for common challenges related to stock management, patient flow management, safety, and waste management:

https://www.jica.go.jp/oda/project/201902918/en_news/newsletter.html



NERICA Rice: A Growing Success Story

The cropping season for New Rice for Africa (NERICA) kicked off in November, and farmers across 10 target irrigation demo sites are thrilled to be cultivating this promising rice variety.

Rice monitoring exercises were carried out in January to March., and the overall performance across the demo sites has been strong, To keep the momentum, JICA rice expert Dr. Matsumoto, and researchers from the Department of Research, Education and Specialist Services and Agriculture and Rural Development Advisory Service staff, visited each site, inspected the crops, and provided on the spot advice for any plants showing signs of stress.

A JICA HQ mission also visited in March to assess, and provide recommendations for improvement.



My JOCV Life in Zimbabwe by Midori Matsunaga (Aug 2024 – Mar 2026)

I am Midori Matsunaga. My Shona name is Mazvita.

This is my favourite Shona word. In Zimbabwe, my colleagues and friends called me Mazvita.

My JOCV journey in Zimbabwe began in August 2024, and what an unforgettable experience it has been. I had the opportunity to volunteer both at the Ministry and with an NGO, and every moment as a JOCV was so memorable.

But above all, the time I spent with the little kids who lived in the same apartment building will forever remain my greatest treasure. I learned the warmth of Zimbabwean people and the things that are truly important in life from those little kids.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to the children and their parents for giving me such a wonderful time and a memorable experience.



● To my little friends

Thank you for the year and a half we shared together in Zimbabwe. I was happy to spend the time with you.

I learned so much from you, your kindness, your joy, and your ability to care for each other. Sharing your food, gladly lending your toys, and treating your friends with love - these are amazing qualities and being able to do these things so naturally, is truly wonderful. Please continue to grow with those beautiful hearts, just the way you are.

I hope you will remember me, even just a little, that your Japanese friend, Mazvita, was here. I would be happy if you do.



A Journey Worth Sharing: My academic, research, and cultural experiences in Japan!

by Mutsa Muhambi

Introduction

This reflection highlights my academic, research, and cultural experiences in Japan, shaped through a JICA supported training course and my JICA sponsored PhD programme in Agriculture. It has been a transformative journey of learning, growth, and connection across cultures.

My Journey in Climate-Resilient Agriculture in Japan

In 2018, I had the privilege of participating in the JICA Training Course on Climate Change Adaptation in Tokyo, Japan. This experience equipped me with hands-on knowledge and skills in climate-resilient agriculture, sustainable agricultural production, soil fertility management, and environmental conservation. The training deepened my understanding of how climate change affects agricultural systems and exposed me to practical effective adaptation and mitigation strategies inspired by Japan's best practices. This learning journey became a foundation for my academic growth and significantly influenced my professional

and research path, strongly shaping my PhD research in Japan, where I focused on biochar, nitrogen fertilizers, greenhouse gas emissions, and soil carbon dynamics in perennial pasture systems.

PhD Journey in Agriculture - AGRINET Programme

My PhD research investigated the effects of biochar and mineral nitrogen fertilizers on greenhouse gas emissions, soil carbon dynamics, and nutrient uptake in perennial pasture systems, specifically tall fescue and white clover. I established a long-term perennial pasture field experiment in the Tottori farming region of Japan to quantify greenhouse gas emissions following biochar application over a two-year period. In addition, I conducted complementary greenhouse experiments on the university campus to examine nutrient uptake and soil-plant interactions under controlled conditions.

I actively disseminated my research findings through oral presentations at international scientific conferences, including the Japanese Society of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition (JSSSPN) Annual Meeting held at the Fukuoka International Congress Centre, Japan (3–7 September 2024), and the Joint New Zealand Soil Science Society and Soil Science Australia Conference, Weaving Soil Science Across Cultures and Environment, held at the Rotorua Energy Events Centre, New Zealand (3–5 December 2024).

Life in Japan & My Cultural Experience

Living in Japan was an unforgettable journey that provided rich cultural and social experiences and beautifully complemented my academic and professional growth. Adjusting to Japan's unique seasons was a remarkable part of the experience. I witnessed snowfall for the very first time and learned to navigate the hot, humid summers of Tottori, which strengthened my resilience and adaptability. I immersed myself in the local community, built meaningful friendships with Japanese colleagues, and enjoyed a wide variety of delicious, tasty Japanese cuisine. These daily interactions deepened my appreciation for Japanese culture, values, and way of life. Cycling to the university became part of my daily routine, keeping me healthy while enjoying Japan's safe transport systems. Overall, living in Japan broadened my global outlook, and reinforced core values of discipline, respect, and harmony, values which are embedded in Japanese society.

