

# JICA's WORLD

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University Partnerships:  
**Producing Future  
Leaders**



## Special Issue University Partnerships

# Producing Future Leaders

Universities are important places to foster international cooperation. Partnerships between universities and JICA are bringing benefits to both developing nations and Japan.



### Learning Together in Japan

Universities are collaborating with a lot of international cooperation activities carried out by JICA. Universities host scholars from developing nations, and draw on their specialized knowledge to further research into these nations.

The program hosted by the Graduate School of Engineering, the University of Tokyo, “Water Engineering and Utility Management for Future Leaders,” started in September 2018. In its first year, four students from waterworks agencies and government ministries supervising water supply in Cambodia, Myanmar, and Laos came to Japan. These students have several years of experience in the field and are candidates for future executive positions back home. As Professor Takizawa, an expert in water supply engineering at the Graduate School of Engineering noted, “We gave them research topics that were directly connected with improving management. The scholars would carry out surveys back home, and then analyze the collected data together with Japanese graduate students to find solutions in Japan. The conclusions can then be verified on the ground in their home countries, allowing the scholars to bring back proof of concept for their ideas.”

For example, a student who worked in the Water and Hygiene Bureau of the Yangon City Development

Committee (YCDC) in Myanmar researched the reduction of non-revenue water\* in pipes, and verified that replacing broken water meters would increase the revenue. Around 80% of water meters in Yangon are broken, so YCDC collects water charges based on a fixed-rate fee. “As a result, the water bills are the same for both a big mansion and a tiny house, which isn’t fair,” the student felt. So, on a trial basis, water meters were replaced in one region and the water charges were collected based on the actual consumption. This showed that the increased revenue would offset the cost of replacing water meters after about eight months, after which it would be possible to generate stable revenue.

“Why wasn’t such a simple system introduced earlier?” They say that a second pair of eyes sees things more clearly. When you’re put in a different environment to your normal workplace, discussing things with graduate students and professors, you learn to see things from an objective, long-term perspective,” says Professor Takizawa.

### The Synergistic Effects of Collaboration

Professor Takizawa says, “There are many advantages of collaborating with universities. For example, in the case of scholars’ projects, the scholars can work with Japanese advisors and students to come up with solutions to research problems during the two-

## University Links Create Benefits for Both Developing Nations and Japan



### Mutual Learning Leads the World

Former scholars who studied in Japan are playing active roles as leaders in their home countries, and at a regional and global level.



### Ahead, Together

The experience and knowledge obtained through joint research between universities in Japan and research institutions or universities in developing nations is the driving force behind improving research levels at Japanese universities and developing internationalist perspectives for students.



### Rooted in the Local

Long-standing cooperation between universities in developing nations and Japan builds deep-rooted relationships of trust. An essential ingredient when fostering new solutions to the challenges we face collectively.

year study and put them into practice. In some cases, experimental demonstrations can be carried out during implementation of JICA projects.” The budget for replacing the water meters in the Yangon proof-of-concept test mentioned above was covered as part of the JICA scholar program. Developing nations have deep trust in JICA’s track record of international cooperation. Synergistically, in addition to budgetary support, universities appreciate that JICA’s presence enables scholars to obtain cooperation for research and demonstration in their own countries.

Professor Takizawa adds some encouraging words: “I would like these JICA scholars to hone their skills for organizing data, thinking logically, and seeing the true nature of the issue, and master the ability to apply them to help solve problems in their own countries. After they return, I expect they will be able to become officials capable of identifying new issues, and proposing and carrying out solutions.”

Also of benefit is the opportunity for Japanese students to understand the current realities of developing nations from the scholars’ research, and learn about diversity.

“In addition, it is beneficial to Japan if international researchers can share the Japanese way of thinking and working in their home countries. This will increase the number of people who better understand Japan and the Japanese people. This will not only be positive for international cooperation, but also benefit Japanese people working in developing countries. Moreover, the number of local leaders who understand, trust and support Japan and the Japanese people will increase.”

Having a diverse range of links between JICA and universities, such as programs to host scholars, or survey and research collaboration, will deepen the bonds with developing nations and encourage the mutual development of both Japan and these other nations.



**Professor Takizawa Satoshi,** Graduate School of Engineering, the University of Tokyo



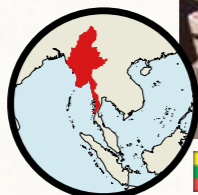
# Learning Together for Mutual Benefit Scholars Connect the World and Japan

Scholars from developing nations have deepened their learning through the links between JICA and universities. Today, they are playing active roles in either their home country or Japan.

## At the Forefront of Diplomacy as a Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



*Mr. Soe Han*



 Myanmar



Mr. Soe working as Permanent Secretary. As committee chair, his days are heavily scheduled.

Mr. Soe Han was part of the first intake of JDS scholars, and spent two years studying management at the graduate school of the International University of Japan in Niigata Prefecture. He was very surprised to see that Japan had full tertiary education facilities not just in the main cities, but also in rural areas. He really appreciated being able to learn about Japanese culture and lifestyles through interactions with local people. "I love snow, so I tried skiing, and also enjoyed sake, one of Niigata's famous local products," he says, fondly reminiscing on his time in the prefecture. Myanmar has one of the largest numbers of slots allocated under the JDS, and Fellows can receive not just tuition but support for their living expenses in Japan. Mr. Soe is grateful for all the support he received. "Student's majors are related to the needs of Myanmar, in areas that could help solve the problems Myanmar faces. After obtaining a master's degree, it is also possible for qualified scholars to continue on to a doctorate. The greatest asset I gained as a JDS scholar was the network I formed with other students, both from Japan and other countries. It is beneficial in building bilateral relations between Myanmar and Japan."

Mr. Soe was appointed Permanent Secre-

tary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Myanmar in 2019, and his days since then have been very busy. In February 2020, he served as representative of Myanmar at the Seventh Japan-Myanmar Human Rights Dialogue held in the Myanmar capital of Nay Pyi Taw. Also in 2020, he participated in online international conferences on COVID-19, reporting on Myanmar's preventative measures and the country's efforts to eliminate it. "As one of the responsible high-level officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I hope to successfully implement Myanmar's foreign policy and promote Myanmar's interests on the international stage," he pointedly notes. Incidentally, a female former JDS Fellow was appointed as Permanent Secretary to the Union Attorney General's Office in December 2019.



Colleagues he met in Japan in his student days are now playing active roles around the world.



With his faculty advisor, on graduating from the International University of Japan in 2004.

### Mr. Soe Han

Born in Myanmar. Completed the Masters of Business Management at the International University of Japan in Niigata Prefecture from 2002 to 2004 as part of the first intake of JDS Fellows. In 2019, he became the first former JDS Fellow to be appointed Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

## Promoting Tourism Development as a Leader

Ms. Amonzoda and her girls became part of the community when they lived in Beppu.



*Ms. Shirin Amonzoda*



 Tajikistan

Giving a lecture at a Tajikistan university.

Ms. Shirin Amonzoda first came to Japan to work in public relations for the Tajikistan Pavilion at Expo 2005 in Aichi Prefecture. She soon fell in love with Japan, and made it her goal to come to the country to study. Her dream was realized when she spent two years at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University's graduate school, from 2014 to 2016. Along with young leaders from around the world, she studied both the theory and practice of public policy, from past to present. "I think the JDS is a very important chance that provides valuable opportunities to female civil servants working in Tajikistan, in a way that allows them to balance their academic and private lives in Japan," says Ms. Amonzoda. During her time as a scholar, she lived with her two daughters in Beppu, Oita Prefecture. She also planned festivals to celebrate the new year for Middle Eastern and central Asian countries, and organized cultural events that featured Tajikistan cooking. "I am very grateful to everyone at the Beppu City Office for actively introducing the culture, traditions, and lifestyle of Tajikistan to Beppu City." During her stay in Japan, there were some difficult times, with both her parents dying in succession, but she overcame the difficulties thanks to the support from those around her.

On returning to Tajikistan, she was appointed as deputy chair of the newly-formed Tourism Development Committee. With the help of

other government ministries and agencies, she created a tourist development strategy that will run until the year 2030, and compiled an action plan to put it into practice. In 2020, she was promoted to chair of this committee.

Asked the significance of studying abroad, Ms. Amonzoda explains, "I researched tourism, public planning and policy in Japan, as well as the role of the government in tourism planning. This research experience in Japan proved very helpful when I was appointed to a key position in tourism development. I feel the skills developed will continue to be of use in the future." She is committed to working for the expansion of the tourism industry in Tajikistan.



As committee chair, her days are filled.

### Ms. Shirin Amonzoda

From Tajikistan. Lived in Beppu, Oita Prefecture, as a JDS Fellow from 2014 to 2016, researching Tajikistan tourism development and public policy planning in the graduate school of Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. On her return home, she was appointed deputy chair of the Tourism Development Committee in 2017, and in 2020 was promoted to chair (which in Tajikistan is a Cabinet-level post).

## About the JDS

The Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) invites young public administrators who are expected to become policy makers in their home countries, to study at graduate schools in Japan. It started in 1999 as a grant aid project. Emphasizing the needs of the partner countries, it provides learning in fields related to development issues and key fields in developing nations. In the 2019 academic year, 360 Fellows from 16 nations were hosted by the program. Including both master's and doctoral courses, more than 4,600 Fellows have studied in Japan.



At a Buddhist temple in Hirameji, Hyogo Prefecture. She visited Vietnamese migrant communities on an internship in 2017, where she learned about the support measures Hyogo Prefecture offers.



**Vietnam**

**Ms. Nguyen Thi Huyen Trang**  
MEXT Scholarship Student,  
Kobe University

From Vietnam. After learning English at university, she enrolled in the Area Studies master's program at Vietnam Japan University, specializing in Vietnam. In 2018 she was awarded a MEXT Scholarship to study in Japan, where she is presently researching international labor migration at Kobe University.

**To Contribute to Peaceful Bilateral Relations**

*Ms. Nguyen Thi Huyen Trang*

After working as an English teacher, Ms. Nguyen Thi Huyen Trang studied at Vietnam Japan University as one of their first intake of students, and is now in the doctoral course at Kobe University. Her achievements are a testimony to her impressive ambitions.

"I was fortunate enough to secure a job teaching in my study field of English, but it also circumscribed my viewpoints and the approaches available within my field. I felt a more interdisciplinary approach was needed in order to tackle pressing global problems and achieve personal development. Searching for a new path to take, I came across Vietnam Japan University," reflects Ms. Nguyen.

It seems that she had some worries about enrolling in a newly established university, but, as Ms. Ngyuen explained, "Vietnam Japan University emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach for sustainable development which was highly attractive to me. Moreover, the university is a collaboration between Vietnam and Japan involving top universities and supported by JICA. This meant I could access the high-quality education of Japan, but also have it integrated with education in Vietnam. Considering I would also be receiving guidance from experts in sustainable development, and have the total support of JICA, it was an easy decision to enroll."

Her specialization at Vietnam Japan University was Area Studies (Vietnam), a topic she had not previously studied. There were some difficulties with tackling this new field, but she received support from her instructors, both Japanese and Vietnamese, and learnt a lot. She says she was particularly impressed by the instructors' perseverance and their research careers. "I experienced both the Japa-

nese and Vietnamese perspectives in these studies. The impressive levels of effort by the Japanese faculty and their underlying passion for academia, combined well with the flexible approach to problems of the Vietnamese faculty. They were complementary like the right and left hand. Likewise, I aspire to be able to use both those hands well on a daily basis." Ms. Nguyen notes she is still in contact with some of her instructors.

After graduation, she got a MEXT Scholarship from Japan and entered the doctoral program at Kobe University. Her current research field is the protection and support of Vietnamese workers in Japan. This is a complex and topical theme, but Ms. Nguyen is undaunted: "I want to do whatever I can to contribute to improving the policies related to hosting workers in Japan and the relationships between Japanese employers and Vietnamese workers. I believe that deepening mutual understanding and an increasing wealth of cooperation based on harmony between our two countries, will allow Vietnam to achieve sustainable development," she adds, touching on her hopes for the future.



**About Vietnam Japan University**

An international-level university that symbolizes friendship between Japan and Vietnam. It opened in September 2016, in accordance with the joint Japan-Vietnam declaration. At present, it has eight master's course programs. JICA has been providing technical cooperation since 2016, establishing and operating master's courses with the collaboration from seven universities in Japan. JICA's role includes cooperating the development of the university's organizational system, dispatching Japanese teaching staff, and providing internships in Japan.



Ms. Nguyen interviewing Vietnamese workers (left)



The spread of COVID-19 has prompted a widespread recognition of the preventative effects of handwashing. However, in Uganda the custom of handwashing has not yet taken root. Consequently, the local subsidiary of the Japanese company Saraya has been producing and selling hand sanitizer, as well as providing training for medical practitioners and helping raise awareness at schools and kindergartens. Ms. Ajok has been supporting these activities since the local subsidiary was first established. Then in 2016, she participated in the ABE Initiative to improve her skills even further.

"My main motivation for coming to Japan was due to the lack of experts in public health at Saraya in Uganda. I was able to learn all sorts of things about health and medicine at Nagasaki University. For example, I visited the Philippines and learned how their health system functioned, and understood how cooperation from Japan was contributing to its health system. I was also able to intern at the World Health Organization's Collaboration Center for Infection Prevention and Control at Geneva University Hospital. Over these three-months I learnt a lot about managing infections," Ms. Ajok explains.

She is able to apply a lot of the specialized

knowledge she gained through the Program in her current work. When she proposed a policy that would improve hygiene in medical institutions after returning to Uganda, she explains "I collaborated with a research team from Geneva, and thanks to the research skills I picked up in Japan I was able to present an evidence-based solution."

Her immediate task is to deal with COVID-19, for which hand hygiene is of particular importance. There are only two companies in Uganda making hand sanitizer, and Saraya's high quality product is in great demand. Ms. Ajok describes her present role: "We are currently serving clients from the entire East African region, and there are high expectations towards fighting COVID-19. In addition, we provide expert advice on the location of hand hygiene dispensers in different public places like, schools, banks, offices among others."

In the future, Ms. Ajok hopes to work to disseminate the importance of hygiene in rural communities as well. She also looks forward to working with JICA in the future, saying "I want to continue being a bridge between Africa and Japan."

**Ms. Robinah Ajok**  
Chief Hygiene Instructor,  
Saraya Manufacturing (U) Ltd.

From Uganda. After graduating from university, she joined the local subsidiary of Saraya, a Japanese company. She came to Japan in 2016 to study public health at Nagasaki University. After doing an internship at Saraya's head office, she is now playing an important role as a hygiene expert.



During fieldwork in the Philippines.



**Uganda**

She also experienced an internship at Saraya's head office in Japan. "I realized that Japanese people consider efficiency in everything," she says.

**Applying the Skills Learned in Japan to Improve Hygiene Back Home**

*Ms. Robinah Ajok*

**About the ABE Initiative**

In this program, young Africans are invited to Japan to both obtain their master's degree at a Japanese university and get the chance to intern with a Japanese company. The aim is to train human resources for African industry and cultivate "navigators" who will support Japanese businesses in Africa. In the five years since its 2014 inception, more than 1,200 young Africans from 54 countries have come to Japan.

Yezin Agricultural University (YAU), Myanmar's only agricultural university.



YAU photographed from above using a drone.

Researching the growth of rice and vegetables.



Ahead, Together

# Becoming a University That Can Conduct Research at an International Level

Yezin Agricultural University (YAU) was facing some issues with the quality of education and research, as well as the planning and management of the university. To support solving these issues, JICA teamed up with a network of universities in Japan working at the forefront of international cooperation in the field of agriculture. This collaboration has worked so well, YAU is now looking to expand good relationships with universities in other ASEAN countries.

## Students and Academic Staff Take the Initiative

In Myanmar, about 70% of the population are engaged in agriculture. YAU is the only university-level higher education institution in Myanmar teaching agriculture, and produces a number of government officials agricultural technicians, extension officers, and researchers. However, as both a teaching institution and a research institution, YAU has not been able to invest sufficient funds in equipment and facilities, nor adequately enhance human resources development. To overcome this situation, YAU submitted a request for technical cooperation to JICA to help foster and strengthen human resource to an international level. In 2013, JICA supported construction of lecture and laboratory buildings, and the installment of laboratory equipment. On the completion of two buildings in 2015, a five-year technical cooperation project commenced, specifically targeting the enhancement of the university's capacity in the three fields of management, education,

and research.

Mr. Tanaka Koji, Professor Emeritus of Kyoto University, was dispatched as the first Chief Advisor for the project and tasked with providing technical assistance on education and research. On arrival he encountered an outdated university system. "There was a top-down university management structure in place, a relic of the military administration. Education was based around a fixed curriculum focused on lectures, and it seemed as if students had no autonomy, and no researchers were being trained." So, along with YAU academic staff, Professor Tanaka started a survey of areas to improve in the university. In addition to the survey, the students and teachers were introduced to methods that would allow them to understand the issues more deeply and come up with ways to solve issues themselves. "With time the teachers changed their outlook. They came to understand the importance of pursuing research topics and the shape of the education they wanted to engage in," explains Professor Tanaka.

Rice is also grown at the university, and the growth status and other aspects are carefully measured.



Students conducting experiments under the guidance of experts from Japan.



Instruction on biological microscope usage.

Let's cooperate internationally!

## Japan Intellectual Support Network in Agricultural Sciences

JISNAS is a network of agricultural universities established to utilize the resources of Japanese universities in the field of international cooperation, including human resources and research. As of September 2019, it had 53 university members and 120 individual members. JISNAS itself is learning much from the YAU project. In addition to all member universities working together to provide assistance, JISNAS also hosts JICA's African Rice Promotion training as well as accepting international students from Afghanistan, Myanmar and other countries.

within JISNAS about areas of potential cooperation and willingness to be involved in the project." This information allowed us to dispatch experts who had both the knowledge YAU wished to obtain and would willingly cooperate to improve Myanmar's agriculture.

Also, through a collaboration with JISNAS, increasing numbers of universities in Japan have been hosting YAU academic staff when they come to Japan to study. Japanese universities also derive benefits in contributing to the agricultural development in Myanmar, which has high potential for agricultural growth. There is also an expectation that international scholars will create ripple effects, helping support Japanese agriculture and the food industry.

In addition, JICA facilitates the invitation of experts from various ASEAN nations and the academic exchange programs to cooperate with universities in Thailand and Vietnam that are participating in JICA technical cooperation projects. There are also ideas for joint seminars and symposia, which will further strengthen collaboration with ASEAN nations.

The project is ready to enter its second stage. "In Myanmar, primary and secondary educational reforms are currently being legislated, after which, the next step is tertiary education reform," Professor Ogata says. "I think we need to make sure the next stage of cooperation matches the needs of the time, such as promoting research that leads to achieving the SDGs, in order to give meaning to cooperation. COVID-19 is drastically changing how universities operate, and both Japan and Myanmar are being forced to make changes and to utilize technology. I hope that we can continue to share our experiences while maintaining our exchanges."

## Active Relations with Japanese University Networks

A number of experts have been dispatched to YAU from universities in Japan. This has been made possible by the Japan Intellectual Support Network in Agricultural Sciences (JISNAS). Professor Ogata Kazuo, one of the deputy vice-presidents of Kyushu University and chair of the JISNAS Steering Committee, has been involved with the YAU project since 2012. He expands upon the merits of the collaboration between JISNAS and the project. "A lot of universities in Japan carry out research in agriculture fields, and each of them has its own field of expertise. Therefore, before starting the project we asked

Thanks to this project, it is now possible to carry out classes and research in a setting where the necessary equipment is available. This is a very significant outcome. We are now able to gain knowledge from a global perspective as well as from a Myanmar perspective. Our goal is to become a university that meets international standards, a place where research to solve Myanmar's agricultural problems can be carried out. I hope that we can continue this cooperative relationship with Japan.



Dr. Seint San Aye,  
Professor, Yezin Agricultural University



# Rooted in the Local Drawing on a Wealth of Achievements

For many years, both Nagasaki University and Hokkaido University have been cooperating with developing nations in the field of infectious disease control. Systems and personnel rooted in these countries further broaden the options for cooperation and assistance.



Working in the BSL\*2/3 laboratory in Zambia.



Working in the School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zambia.

## Communicating Over Many Years

JICA has long been engaged in infectious disease control with Japanese universities. Partner institutions around the world include: the Kenya Medical Research Institute, the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Zambia, the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana in Africa, and the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology in Vietnam in Asia.

One prominent example is mSOS\*1, an information system used in the Kenyan Ministry of Health. Developed in a joint project with Nagasaki University, this system can survey and monitor the outbreak of infectious diseases using mobile phones. In addition, in the field of research and development, results from research conducted with Hokkaido University in Zambia led to the development of a rapid diagnosis kit that is effective in preventing the spread of the Ebola virus.

Both universities are also putting efforts into the development of human resources. In Nagasaki University's Program for Nurturing Global Leaders in Tropical and Emerging Communicable Diseases, local physicians and researchers learn Japanese techniques related to infectious diseases, allowing them to demonstrate leadership in the field after returning to their own country. Since 2017, Hokkaido University has been running the Zoonosis Control Expert Certification Program at its Graduate School of Infectious Diseases. The program trains specialists in

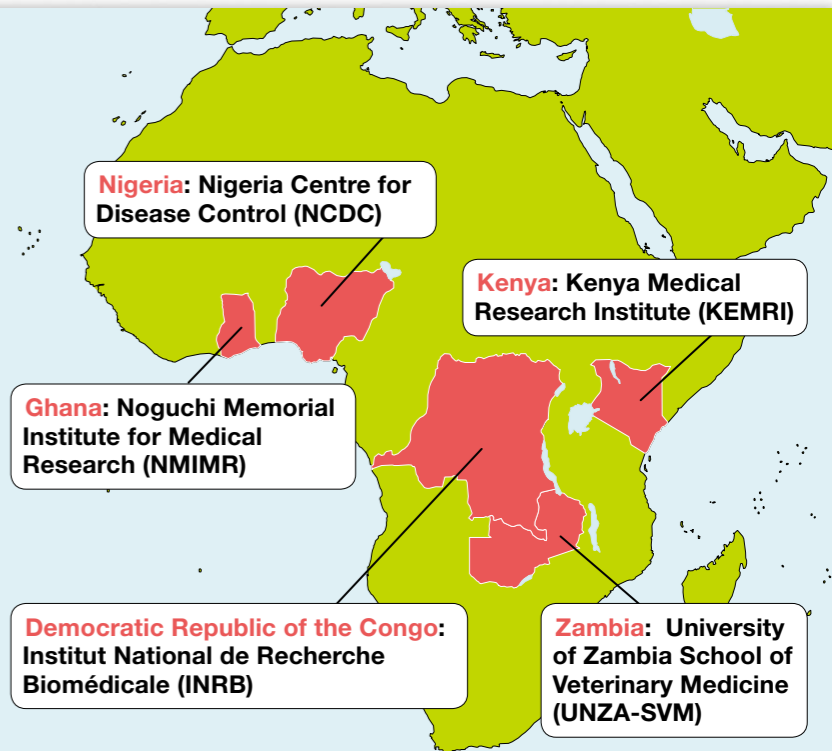
infectious diseases that affect both humans and animals. In addition, from 2018, a "Global Zoonosis Control Expert Training Course" was launched for graduates of the course, as well as researchers, government officials, and others with the requisite level of knowledge and skills.

## Effective Responds to Emergencies

Achievements accumulated over time are helping in the battle against COVID-19, which is currently causing havoc around the world.

"Four people in Zambia who studied at our university are now playing key roles in combating COVID-19," says Dr. Kajihara Masahiro of the Hokkaido University Research Center for Zoonosis Control. At the request of the University of Zambia, the Center has introduced locally the COVID-19 detection methods used in Japan. There are also strong bonds with members at the Zambia base. This laboratory has improved significantly over more than thirty years of joint research. As a result, even under these trying circumstances, it can match the level of inspections found in Japan.

"We are looking for more effective testing methods tailored to local conditions," says Dr. Morita Koichi, the Institute of Tropical Medicine at Nagasaki University. The university's research has led to the development of a rapid detection method of COVID-19, which is simpler and can produce results in about ten minutes. The university is now



## Labs in Africa Combating Infectious Diseases

As part of its countermeasures against infectious diseases in Africa, JICA has been cooperating with centers in each region of Africa through a combination of grant aid to develop facilities, and technical cooperation in human resource development and research. Equipped with advanced and safe laboratories, and highly skilled personnel, these centers have grown into a leading force for infectious disease control in the region.

Provision of COVID-19 test reagents to Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) and training in real time RT-PCR (test method) for KEMRI staff at the University of Nagasaki's Kenya base.

considering expanding the method beyond Japan. The test equipment consumes little electricity and runs on batteries. This is particularly important in developing countries, where there is unreliable transportation infrastructure, frequent power outages, and long periods of time for patients and specimens to be transported to urban laboratories.

According to Dr. Sawa Hirofumi, Director of the Zambian Research Center for Zoonosis Control and Infectious Diseases, countermeasures against the COVID-19 have been made possible by the continuous cooperation which has taken root in the local community, rather than just temporary assistance. He addressed these rooted factors, noting that developing countries have personnel with highly

specialized knowledge and skills, they have facilities equipped to handle highly infectious and dangerous pathogens, and Japan has a good understanding of the situation in the recipient country.

A relationship based on trust with the locals, established through long years of cooperation and assistance is also an asset for Japan. Universities and research institutions in Japan use specimens and information obtained from overseas research sites. In addition, there is a synergistic effect of strengthening and enhancing the foundation of infectious disease research in Japan by utilizing these research results and research networks.

\*1 mobile SMS-based disease outbreak alert system

\*2 BSL: Short for Bio Safety Level. Rankings given to facilities that handle things like microorganisms and pathogen. Ranges from Level 1 to Level 4. The higher the number, the more risky pathogens it can handle.

# Japan's Experience for Future Leaders of Developing Countries

The JICA Development Studies Program was launched for scholars from developing countries to learn experiences from both Japan's modernization and assistance for developing countries. This section talks about these goals.

## Two Programs, Co-organized with Partner Universities in Japan

JICA Development Studies Program (JICA-DSP) was established for future leaders of developing countries. The Program offers them the opportunity to learn about Japan's modernization and development experiences, which differs from those of Europe and the U.S.. It also contains wisdom gained as a country that provided cooperation toward the progress of developing countries after World War II. JICA started

the program, in October 2018, with universities that share the JICA-DSP vision. JICA collaborates with these universities and provides two programs for international students ("JICA scholars") in master's or doctor's degree courses in Japan.

The first program is "Understanding the Japanese Development Experience (the Common Program)," where students learn about Japan's modernization process beginning with the Meiji Restoration, postwar high economic growth, and contribution to

international cooperation on development. JICA scholars around Japan gather at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS) in Tokyo, or at the International University of Japan (IUJ) in Nigata. They have five days of intensive lectures and discuss how they use Japan's experience for the development of home countries. The second is the "Development Studies Programs Offered by Various Universities (the Individual Programs)." In this program, alongside Japanese students, JICA scholars take classes in English focused on how modern (prewar) Japan experienced development in a wide range of fields, including politics, law, economics, social development, science and technology, and innovation.

overseas systems and hungrily adopted the ideas it felt would work. This course is not merely about Japanese history, it is about learning the processes." Regarding the Development Studies Programs Offered by Various Universities course, Mr. Konya discusses his expectations for the future careers of JICA scholars. "I want them to become leaders who take a long-term perspective and work for the development of their own country by formulating and implementing policies based on a long-term vision. I hope that the program will foster leaders who will maintain a long-lasting bilateral relationship between each country and Japan, and hope to work together to realize a peaceful, free, and prosperous world, which Japan values so much."

## Fostering Future Leaders in Developing Countries

Mr. Konya Kenichi, Director of Office for JICA Development Studies Program, says, "Not all of Japan's modernization history is applicable to developing countries. At the time, Japan was desperately trying to find ways to deal with the world on an equal basis and survive. It actively investigated

At present, 86 universities have shared the JICA-DSP concept and signed on a memorandum of cooperation. Of these, 21 universities provide 28 Development Studies Programs Offered by Various Universities (the Individual Programs). In 2018, JICA received 721 scholars, and 692 in 2019. JICA will accept 2,000 scholars expected for 2022, marking the fifth year of this program.

## Understanding the Japanese Development Experience

### Development Studies Programs Offered by Various Universities



JICA scholars study Japan's experience in their respective fields with Japanese students at the regular classes in the partner universities.



### Understanding the Japanese Development Experience



JICA scholars learn about the development of modern and contemporary Japan and the history of international cooperation on development in a series of intensive lectures.



## Voices of the Participants and Lecturers

### Learn about Japan from a Variety of Perspectives

Themes at workshops now cover things like the lack of vacancies at nursery schools in Japan and Japanese "Workaholic" styles. We want them to learn about Japan from a variety of perspectives, and then be of use to their own countries.



Lecturer in the Understanding the Japanese Development Experience course

### Exploring Solutions to the Issues in Your Home Country

We have investigated measures for solving issues such as waste disposal and water/sewerage by comparing Japan and the students' home countries. The students' presentations were varied, and the lecturers also gained a lot.



Lecturer in the Development Studies Programs Offered by Various Universities course

### A Foundation for Developing Public Policy at the Civil Aviation Authority

After returning home, I have been working as an undersecretary at the State Secretariat of Civil Aviation, the organization which regulates the air transport industry in Cambodia. Public sector leadership is about making peoples' lives safer and more prosperous, and this requires a deep, clear understanding of evidence-based policy formulation processes. It is a fundamental process, something that was made clear during my studies in Japan.



Mr. Peouv Polinel, State Secretariat of Civil Aviation

Came to Japan on the SDGs Global Leadership Program.\*  
\*A long-term study program by which administrative officials in Asia, Oceania, Latin America, and Africa study in master's or doctoral courses at a Japanese graduate school with the aim of getting a degree.



Development Studies Programs Offered by Various Universities (the Individual Programs). In April 2019, JICA President Kitaoka Shinichi gave a special lecture on Japan's modernization and ODA policies.

JICA invites future leaders and promoters of the developing countries and fosters them as JICA scholars. JICA scholars will gain a deep understanding of Japan and play a significant role as leaders in their respective fields after their return, fostering a long lasting bilateral relationship between each respective country and Japan.

### Friendship with Japan



After returning home, JICA scholars are expected to play roles as bridges between their countries and Japan, to contribute to JICA projects etc..

### Development of the Home Country



The knowledge, skills, and problem-solving methods learned in Japan are applied to solve pressing problems in their own countries upon their return. They will further refine these attributes as leaders in the country or wider region.

## JICA Scholars Attend Online JICA Joint Program 2020



From August 31 to September 2, 2020, the JICA Joint Program 2020 was held online for JICA scholarship program participants that arrived in Japan during 2019. The program aimed to boost their sense of purpose and stimulate networking. Around 200 participants, out of 305 current JICA scholars of various programs, gathered together - albeit virtually. It was the first event of

such kind. On August 31, JICA President Kitaoka Shinichi delivered a message on the subject of JICA's Challenges and Cooperation with Developing Countries in the Post-Corona Era.

First, President Kitaoka welcomed all the participants as members of the "JICA family" and emphasized the significance of studying abroad at a young age. He then spoke to broader issues, "JICA is taking a number of bold initiatives to turn the corona crisis into an opportunity. Among them, the key initiative is to establish resilient health systems in developing countries. Functional hospitals should be at the core of such a system. To achieve this goal, we would like to join forces with you." President Kitaoka further encouraged participants, saying, "As we continue to undergo this unprecedented situation, I urge all of you to envision what we can achieve together

during this turbulent time."

The session was followed by a presentation from two participants, and a Q&A session between the participants and President Kitaoka. The participants talked about the impact of the COVID-19 in their home countries, and talked positively about the prospect of working with many experts to come up with strategies to deal with the crisis.

It is hoped that the participants will play a leading role in their home countries, fostering cross-cultural understanding and furthering good relations with Japan. In conclusion, President Kitaoka said, "I believe that you are the link between your home countries and Japan, as well as the bridge to our future. JICA, with its vision of leading the world with trust, strongly believes that this bond is what is most needed at this unprecedented time."

## ODA Loans to Boost Bangladesh



On August 12, JICA signed loan agreements with the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to provide Japanese ODA loans of up to a total of 338.247 billion yen. This latest series of loans covers seven projects that will enhance the development of Bangladesh's transport infrastructure,

economic growth, improvement of living conditions, urban environments and help create sustainable cities.

The projects detailed below cover a wide range of infrastructure and will benefit the entire country. The Jamuna Railway Bridge Construction Project will enhance logistics and rail passenger network capacity internally and with neighbouring countries. The Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport Expansion Project (II), which includes constructing new terminals and other infrastructure to meet future demand for air transportation and to improve airport capacity. Two Mass Rapid Transit Development Projects in Dhaka will reduce traffic congestion, air pollution, and add a new line to increase coverage to more urban areas. The Chattogram-Cox's Bazar Highway Improvement Project will improve roads at congested town

areas along the National Highway 1, and increase economic growth by smoothing cargo flows between hubs. The Food Value Chain Improvement Project will enhance the food value chain in Bangladesh by providing concessional financing and technical assistance for agribusinesses and food processing industries. Finally, the Urban Development and City Governance Project plans to improve urban functioning by improving urban infrastructure and strengthening city governance related to infrastructure development in the target cities. Combined, these projects address multiple UN Sustainable Development Goals and will make a significant contribution towards Bangladesh's socioeconomic development.

## Connecting Malaysia with Modern and Traditional Japan

Hafiz Othman first encountered JICA at the age of 13 when his secondary college was one of six in Malaysia selected to offer education in Japanese as a second language. His teachers were volunteers dispatched from Japan under the JICA-Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers program, and five years of study set the foundation for him to enter the University of Tsukuba and beyond. After graduation, Hafiz worked in a financial institution in Tokyo, later returning home to work with the Malaysian Government as part of its "Look East" program to increase the country's engagement with the developed nations of East Asia. In this position, and in later positions at the Japan Foundation in Malaysia and since 2010 at the JICA Malaysia office, Hafiz has established a firm role for himself as a bridge between Japan and his home country.

Hafiz's deep understanding of Japan has allowed him to assume this bridging role. The Japanese concept of "omoiyari," a way of thinking and acting where one is aware of ones' words and actions and considerate of others, has been highly influential for

Hafiz. His understanding of omoi-yari was refined through various club activities and part-time work during his student days, which helped him consider how his actions and words would affect other people or the shared situation. Hafiz is convinced of the power of this concept, "If you act with omoi-yari, a kind of 'domino effect' occurs, and your actions change your surroundings. Mysteriously, many things go well."

Entranced by traditional Japanese culture, Hafiz is proficient in both the koto (Japanese harp) and the Japanese tea ceremony, as well as being well schooled in Japanese history, politics and economics. He believes Japan has much to share with the wider world. "Foreign students can learn that balance and harmony can lead to the building of a strong nation state - economically, socially and culturally." He thinks that by understanding the history and people of Japan, one can learn more effective ways of communication with many people, not to mention the Japanese, and gain a deeper understanding of ways of communicating beyond mere words.



At JR Hokkaido to observe the maintenance process of Blue Train coaches for the used-coach donation project to Malaysian Railways Ltd



Specially invited by the Imperial Household Agency of Japan to greet Emperor Naruhito (the then Crown Prince) during His Majesty's visit to University of Malaya in 2017



**Muhammad Hafiz bin Othman,**  
Senior Program Manager,  
JICA Malaysia



# Absorbing Japanese Wisdom through University Experiences

Dr. Edwin P. Mhede

Commissioner General, Tanzania Revenue Authority

My interest in Japan first emerged when pursuing my Bachelor of Science degree at Sokoine University of Agriculture in Tanzania. I had heard about the hard-working ethos and high productivity of Japanese workers, and was very impressed by the outstanding quality of Japanese products. The country had caught my attention, and I began researching the economic literature and history of Japan's rise to being an advanced developed nation. I was particularly intrigued by the Japanese paradigm of multi-faceted innovations stimulating firm-level adoption of efficient manufacturing and agricultural technologies. I became very interested in gaining opportunities to deepen my knowledge by studying in Japan, and in 2008 this became a reality. After sitting written examinations and oral interviews at the JICA Tanzania Office, I was awarded a JICA scholarship to undertake a Master's course at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), in Tokyo.

Upon arriving in Japan, I got a clear impression that the Japanese were respectful, an impression that remains to this day. While I was not accustomed to the cuisine, I found it very healthy and satisfying, and was moved by the beauty of the environment of Japan and the hospitality of the Japanese people. Also, I was highly appreciative of the learning environment, and my transition to student life was aided by the university offering dormitory accommodation, and by its providing clear guidance on how to transition to a Japanese lifestyle. My Master's degree studies were so successful that in 2013 I was able to secure a Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) scholarship, which allowed me to continue on to Doctoral studies at GRIPS. Schooling in Japan inspires students with a strong sense of hope, not only the hope



to graduate, but more importantly to accumulate hands-on skills to compete in the national and international labor markets. The learning and teaching environment between students and distinguished professors, along with the help of tutorials, makes for quality learning and accountability. Research undertakings are of high quality and well-grounded, offering empirical evidence that help end-users understand the analytical findings and allow for informed policy decision making.

If you have the opportunity, I strongly recommend studying in Japan. It is a unique study destination that guarantees

learning and personal growth. I appreciate JICA's having granted a scholarship to me and to others interested in acquiring an advanced degree level of proficiency. Such scholarships are opportunities for scholars to learn about the wisdom underpinning Japan's economic development and to transfer such lessons, with appropriate modifications, to our own countries. I find myself constantly drawing upon my knowledge, experience and connections from my time in Japan, helping me build a lasting bridge between both countries and aiding in the development of Tanzania.

**Profile:**

Dr. Mhede is a development economist by training with over 15 years working experience in government, private and the banking sectors specifically in development economics, trade, economic policy, international negotiations and experience in industrial research and investment. He has held various management roles in the government to the level of Deputy Permanent Secretary of Trade and Investment at the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investments. He holds a Ph.D. and Masters' Degree in Development Economics from the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo, Japan. He also holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness from Sokoine University of Agriculture in Morogoro, Tanzania.