

Absorbing Japanese Wisdom through University Experiences

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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.