

# ~Welcome Message for prospective JICA students~

## Message from Current Students

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**MOSES OCHIENG OWITI (Kenya)**

Master Student at Department of Engineering, Graduate School of Sustainability Science, Tottori University, Japan

Tottori University is one of the best choices if not the best for an international student who opts to study in Japan. It is strategically placed hence convenient access to rail, air transport and other services that one may need from time to time like those of the post office.

On arrival, I met International Affairs Division Staff and a student who gave me a warm welcome, a memory that has kept a smile on my face to date. As an ABE Scholar, I enrolled for a Master Course in Information and Electronics Engineering under the Graduate School of Engineering in September 2019. From my personal experience as an international student, the International Affairs Division takes a keen interest in making you feel as part of the community through continuous support throughout your stay in Tottori and are always willing and ready to assist by listening.

Apart from the social aspect, each department at Tottori University is strong and boasts of a world-class faculty addressed by the teaching staff and availed technology to the students at their disposal. Facilities are not overstretched hence creating room for everyone and the space for more. This prepares the students for the real world challenges that they would join and be part of their solutions.

The environment is beautiful, conducive for study bringing new scenarios over the four seasons experienced and one has to have the necessary attire to enjoy nature unfolding. Generally, the community is welcoming, friendly and enjoy sharing about culture as well as experience. Learning the culture firsthand is a good experience one should take advantage of, as it is beautiful and in my opinion good for one's health. In a few words, the environment in and around Tottori University provides the opportunity for a holistic approach in developing human resource.

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**ACHAM COLUMBUS ERUKUDI (Kenya)**

Master Student at Department of Dryland Science, Graduate School of Sustainability Science Tottori University, Japan

Before I narrate on the so good stay in Tottori University, my first nice experience in Japan was landing in Narita international airport in Tokyo. The airport is so big and modern compared to the one in my home country called Jomo Kenyatta international airport.

That to me marked the beginning of an interesting, informative and educative stay in Japan.

I began studies at Tottori University in the first week of November 2020 as a Master of Science Student in the department of dryland science under JICA AGRI-NET scholarship. My undergraduate field of study/department in Kenya was land resource management and agricultural technology. I graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in management of

agroecosystems and environment. It is this educational background that made me develop interest in pursuing further studies in areas of dryland farming, sustainable land management and climate smart agriculture.

I was also motivated by the fact that my home area is in the northern part of Kenya which is an ASAL (arid and semi-arid area) experiencing harsh climatic conditions with periodic drought situations annually. My tribe people largely practise pastoralism with an increasing number now embracing and adopting agro-pastoralism.

I was warmly welcomed by my master's course primary supervisor Prof. Haruyuki Fujimaki who made sure I comfortably settled down as fast as possible. Under our labs Professor instructions, my lab mate for master's course Daiki San helped me with all the city office processes to acquire necessary documents for my stay in Tottori city. I felt so lucky and special. I felt at home actually because also the International Affairs Division staff were so supportive and friendly.

Tottori University arid lands research centre campus has a good well known global reputation as it has significantly contributed through its robust research network to sustainable livelihoods in the dry areas across the world. The centre is well equipped with modern facilities to support effective research work. The centre is located in a nice quiet place conducive for learning and surrounded by green bush trees. The sand fields for crop production research in the centre simulate real dry land conditions.

My master's research topic is optimization of cultivated area in a water harvesting bank with plastic sheet and tank. This has been informed by the fact that water scarcity is the largest limitation of agricultural development in the arid Turkana County of northern Kenya. Water harvesting would be one of viable practices under restriction of conventional water resource development.

Tottori city is a nice quiet city. So suitable and conducive for me as I come from a rural place too back in my home country. I can't finish this without mentioning and talking of Tottori sand dunes. A so unique tourist destination that clearly brings out the uniqueness of Tottori prefecture in Japan. Any time am lonely I visit the sand dunes and I feel refreshed.



**AGNES A. DUBE (Zimbabwe)**

Master Student at Department of Dryland Science, Graduate School of Sustainability Science Tottori University, Japan

I highly welcome and encourage any international student wishing to study in Tottori University and highly recommend the institution to all out there seeking to advance their knowledge in various post graduate courses.

The honour to study in Japan, was a humbling one, and being able to do so at Tottori University became an elevating thing. Having a crop research background, I have always been challenged by the smallholder farmers producing more than 70 % of world's food on degraded soils, with little rainfall, under resourced and poverty stricken mostly. I am convinced the research we ought to embark on as research institutes, is one where we come up with technologies that will increase productivity and provide sustainable sources of livelihood for these farmers. As I looked for a university to further my studies along these lines, I came across Tottori

University's Department of Dryland Science, I did not have to think twice about it, this is what I needed, to be equipped with knowledge in creating dryland farming technologies.

The journey so far has been ecstatic, the calibre of Professors is top notch, ones that have real experience in drylands, some working with big international institutes that are already involved in developmental work in these regions. After their lectures you are left challenged, as for me I cannot

wait to go back to my country, for I am filled with this enthusiasm to impact our farming communities. The well-equipped laboratories at Tottori University make you want to navigate extensively the scientific world; you have no excuse for not achieving your goals and dreams. The support from the supervisors is incomparable, you get to discuss research activities as one would do with a friend, they allow you to say your views and help you develop the thoughts, infusing them with their wide expertise, surely only the best can be derived out of this.

My stay in Tottori has been awesome so far, am surrounded by safe, calm, clean and beautiful environment, one which is so safe that I can leave the lab at 1230 midnight, and walk home with no fear for anything, what a safe place! One outstanding thing that Tottori has taught me is to know how to ride a bicycle, one thing I never thought I would ever do in my life, here I am owning and riding one, also learning to speak and write 'Nihongo' which is thrilling too.

Finally, for those that want to study in a calm and steady environment, Tottori University is the place to be. The pressures of busy cities are unheard of here which gives your mind good environment for studying, meditating, and re - organisation in the event you need such.

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**JOHN SEYE OLANREWAJU (Nigeria)**

Doctoral Student at Course of Global Dryland Science, United Graduate School of Agricultural Sciences (UGSAS), Tottori University, Japan

Tottori University's United Graduate School of Agricultural Sciences (UGSAS) is one of the six (6) such schools throughout Japan. It pulls Faculties and Research facilities from three co-operating universities namely: Tottori University, Shimane University, and Yamaguchi University. This has given the UGSAS popularly called **Tottori-Rengou** the strength of three universities combined into one big, advanced, and reputable international university.

Thus, it is a rare privilege for me to study in such an institution as a doctoral student through the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA)'s Agriculture Studies Networks (Agri-Net) scholarship program. I am highly honored to be given admission into Tottori-Rengou as a second-time JICA Scholar, first as an African Business Initiative (ABE) Scholar, and then as an Agri-Net Scholar both under JICA.

Tottori University has trained lots of international students from across the globe and I am delighted to be one of the students that are passing

through Tottori University. It is home to all and sundry as it is foreigner-friendly. Located in a serene environment conducive to both academic and research activities.

Are you a prospective student or researcher? Wouldn't you rather study at Tottori University for the speedy actualization of your career and professional goals?

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**DIDIER SAWADOGO (Burkina Faso)**

Doctoral Student at Course of Bioproduction and Bioenvironmental Sciences, United Graduate School of Agricultural Sciences (UGSAS), Tottori University, Japan

Having the chance to study in a Japanese university is a huge opportunity and a great opening to technology for developing countries. As an agro-economist and research engineer, I was enrolled

under the JICA Agri-Net program, which gave me this great opportunity to complete my Ph D in this prestigious University of Tottori. This JICA Agri-Net program allows young professionals to build a successful career around training and internships on technology and modernization of Japanese agriculture.

Upon my arrival in Tottori, I was warmly welcomed by my laboratory colleague Mr. Yamamoto Yuki who patiently introduced me to Japanese life. I am very grateful to Mr. Yuki who made enough efforts to make my stay in Tottori city pleasant. I would like to say a huge thank you to Prof. Ichizen MATUSMURA who facilitated my integration and put all the means at my disposal to make my studies pleasant. Prof. Kumi YASUNOBU opened her laboratory to me and this allowed me to improve my work and refine my academic research and all the students have warmly allowed my integration to Tottori University. Also, I was very impressed by the staff of the International Affairs Division/Student Exchange Section (IAD) who are always smiling, welcoming and very available to render service despite their often very busy schedules. My stay was enjoyable due to the tireless support and assistance of the IAD and always encourages them in this friendly and helpful atmosphere for international students.

For me, Tottori University remains one of the best universities in Japan. It welcomes huge international students every year which allows and benefits from this cultural mix. Its library offers a pleasant environment to study and do research. It is equipped with thousands of books in English and Japanese and the multitude and diversity of the books makes me spend full days reading in the library. Punctuality, diligence, respect for hierarchy, hard work, and honesty are great values that I have developed through my studies and my professional relationships with Japanese people.

Finally, I would like to give immense gratitude to all the staff of IAD who allowed me to immerse myself in cultural activities that allowed me to learn more about the rich Japanese tradition. Tottori University with its better facilities and equipment and holding a better educational system allowed me to work in a pleasant way and acquire solid scientific knowledge.

I would like to thank very sincerely the JICA Agri-Net program which offered me this great opportunity to build a dynamic professional career and immense experience gained in workshops, seminars and organized trips. Thank you very much for all the Japanese friends and international students to whom we had a great time.

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#### **TAREQ A.S. ABUBAKER (Palestine)**

Doctoral Student at Course of Bioproduction and Bioenvironmental Sciences, United Graduate School of Agricultural Sciences (UGSAS), Tottori University, Japan

My first experienced at tottori university was in 2016, when I came for a training on appropriate management for land and water resource for sustainable agriculture in arid and semi-arid region. During the training I was amazed with the facilities and

lecturers at the university. I also participated in many research/field visits. The good memories of education and social life made me to always think of coming back to Tottori University to achieve my dream of completing Ph.D. studies. I then got the opportunity through JICA to be back in 2021 to make my dream comes true.

Tottori prefecture one of an amazing quite area to live around the world, it is a mainly rural prefecture with its coastline famous for the Tottori Sand Dunes. One of my favorite things is getting to know new places in Tottori City such as visiting sea ,Tottori Sand Dunes, Tottori Prefectural Flower Park and many other places .Also there are many things I like to do such as walking in beautiful nature, learn more about traditional Japanese culture, anime and getting new friends .

I am delighted to have the opportunity to study about entomology at Tottori University. This improved my knowledge and great interest in using semi chemical control methods by means of utilizing natural insect pheromones as part of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Now, I can study this specialization and disseminate this information to the concerned authorities responsible for the agricultural sector in Palestine in order to help farmers, raise awareness, reduce use of chemical pesticides and dissemination of the concept of biological control by using pheromone traps.

Lastly, I want to thank JICA and Tottori University that gave me the opportunity to be able to study at Tottori University as Ph.D. student.



**NANA JEAN BOSCO (Burkina Faso)**

Doctoral Student at Course of Global Dryland Science, United Graduate School of Agricultural Sciences (UGSAS), Tottori University, Japan

Arrived on, 2021 September 8<sup>th</sup>, at Tottori airport for PhD training. I was greeted at Arid Land Research Center (ARLC) by my supervisor Prof. Fujimaki, my colleague's student and Japanese for a welcome party as well as it like yesterday. Tottori University in the quietest place in Japan to study with various foreign students from Africa, South Asia, and Europe. The University has a large library, and restaurant for students with different dishes.

I was very happy with the support from the International Affairs Division about University documents required, they advices for well living in Tottori city, and medical check for student support. I did my Japanese class A, last semester and I plan to perform my language during all my studying in the University. I meet Ito Sensei. She teaches me like a mother, and I do not miss Japanese class most of times. Then, I made friends with other

international students. I'm able to write my name in Katakana Nana san (ナナさん) and I noticed that Nana is 7 and san is 3. As a student from arid regions from Africa, I do my PhD research, at the ARLC in the Irrigation and drainage Lab. My PhD studies focus on Rainwater Harvesting System using Plastic Sheet and Tank, combined with automatic drip irrigation for enhance food and energies security.

I remember until today, I did my best choice to study dryland sciences at ARLC, Tottori University. For those who want to contribute sustainable food production and water management, especially in semi-arid and arid regions, I recommend you Tottori University, Japan.

Tottori city is a famous place to visit when you are studying, visit the sand dunes near ARLC. From ARLC you can reach by 15 min by bicycle, it is a unique place in Japan with camels and a large view of the beach would make you travel the sea one time. Indeed, from my Lab at ARLC, went back to my home the Tottori University, International House (Kaikan) by shuttle bus or bicycle with around 25 min. I live in 5F with students from Indonesia, China, Malaysia, and my colleague from Burkina Faso, we make good friends and share the kitchen room. During holiday, when the weather is good, especially on Saturday I play soccer with my friends from Soudan, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Palestrina, and Japanese Friends. After that, sometimes I went to eat the delicious dishes like ramen, and sushi at restaurants or at convenient stores and talk to nice and respectful people.

Downtown Tottori, by jitensha (bicycle) or densha (train) make me find in love the city with various place I visited. In addition, I met kind workers at Tottori City Hall taking care about my living registration for a well staying in the city during my study when I arrived. I visited Mt. Daisen, with my Professor; Acham Mater's student from Kenya and Dr. Hassan from Egypt. We reach at the top of the mountain 1709 meters, and get a large view of the beautiful nature, drink a cup of Japanese green tea. Getting a rare opportunity to study in Japan, I would like to express all my gratitude to Tottori University President, Professors and IAD staff for convenient place for studying and research facilities.

I would like to thank JICA, through JICA Chugoku for they kind support, scholarship and well management for studying in Japan based on their long-term program Agri-Net. To summarize, in a few words if you are, undergraduate, researcher or graduate student from developing countries or developed countries, please don't think about other Universities, here you found Tottori University, Japan, Good luck.



**PETER OBOSO BENARD (Kenya)**

Doctoral Student at Department of Engineering, Graduate School of Engineering, Tottori University, Japan

welcomed me and helped me to exchange money to Japanese currency. Thereafter, she led me to a waiting bus to take me to a hotel room where I spend fourteen days quarantined because of Covid 19. I was assigned a huge hotel room at MyStay Hotel next to the Narita international airport. The two weeks were relatively hard for me because we couldn't move out of my hotel room. I however enjoyed the hotel food while watching aircrafts taking off from Narita airport.

At the end of the two weeks, I travelled to Tottori University in Tottori city. Here, I have met many other international students who have made my stay fun. However, so far, I haven't had much of an experience about Japanese life and culture because of the COVID-19 restrictions. Nevertheless, I have had some nice experiences in the last few months of my stay. Japanese culture is truly unique and very different from the life I am used to in Nairobi. Here in Japan, there seems to be fewer random interactive activities as many prefer staying alone or not taking the first step on most occasions. Interestingly, one can literally live off supplies from vending machines located in even unlikely locations around the city. Japanese food is wonderful too as most of the food tastes similar to some Kenyan recipes. I love Japanese grilled cow meat served with rice and ocha (Japanese tea). However, everything seems so expensive.

I have also heard stories that it is not acceptable to give small tips contrary to the Kenyan culture where it is almost assumed not tipping is a form of stinginess. Actually, I'm informed, tipping is unacceptable and is considered offensive. Also, recently I forgot to take my one yen from the money machine and the teller came running apologetically with my one yen, just one yen! In my mind I was like, who will do that in Kenya for just one shilling, just a shilling! Maybe not even me, hehe.

In my first month of stay here, I got the opportunity of joining other international students for city tour around Tottori city. I was particularly fascinated by the traditional Japanese house called Minka. This family building history dates back to 400 years. I was amazed to hear that it is the only house that withstood a devastating earthquake and fire disasters that occurred a few years after World War II. It is worth noticing that many of the traditional architectures such as temples, shrines and castles still have the Japanese traditional building styles. Currently, Japanese family houses have evolved to incorporate some western building styles.

These has been my experience here at Tottori as I seek my academic dream, it can be your experience too.

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## Message from Former Students

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**Dayyabu, Muhammad Zaharaddeen**  
(Nigeria)

Master student at Graduate School of  
Agriculture, Laboratory of Water Use and  
Management, Tottori University, Japan

I was enrolled in Tottori University in October 2015 as Abe initiative Master student. I love Tottori University because of its reputability in research aspects concerning agriculture, especially in Arid and semi-arid region. It has first class well trained and experienced Professors that are ready to share their important knowledge. Due to its well-known research capabilities, it trains people on appropriate management of land and water resources for sustainable agriculture in arid and semi-arid region for participant from many developing countries every year.

I am happy to have this great opportunity of studying at Tottori University. Which equipped me with strong academic foundation, with solid research abilities enhanced through practical research with an

advanced technical education, under supervision of Prof. Katsuyuki Shimizu and Dr. Yumi Yoshioka in laboratory of water use and management. I specialized in on-farm water management, which I did my research on comparative study of land and water improvement project and management system between Japan and Nigeria. I got awards of excellent poster presentation at the 8th international conference on environmental and rural development (ICERD) in Thailand. This is because of the high research skills and knowledge I acquired from Tottori University, Japan.

Also, living in Tottori city is a wonderful experience. Tottori city is the most sparsely populated part of Japan, making it a good choice for anyone wanting to get away from the bustle of cities like Tokyo. It is also home to one of Japan's most bizarre features, the Tottori sand dunes, which is few kilometers from the university. The dunes, which are completely unique in Japan, look like something from the Sahara Desert. With imported Camels, which roam around, and add to the fantastic feeling that one has stepped through a portal into the Middle East. It also has a Sand Museum, where different kind of arts work with sand and water only can be seen. Living in Tottori city also is very cheap.

Finally, I would like to inspire everyone that's need to acquire advance technical, practical analytic and problem solving skills through research to come to Tottori University, Japan.

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Zachariah Kinyua Magondu(Kenya)  
Master student at Graduate School of  
Engineering, Tottori University, Japan

I believe that Tottori University is one of the best choices for an international student who would want to study in Japan. Having enrolled for a Master course in the Mechanical Engineering in the graduate school of engineering and my personal experience as an international student, the guidance and treatment afforded to me during admission made me feel welcomed and wanted to be part of the community. Here are some reasons why international students should aspire to study in Tottori University.

For career prospects in the future for international student who consider returning to their countries or working in Japan the quality of education in this University commands significant influence. Each department at Tottori University is strong and boasts a world-class faculty. The university and its vicinity are beautiful and the weather is very diverse all year round and as long as you are armed with a sturdy winter coat, snow boots and an umbrella you will be good for the rest of the year. Culture is a really important aspect to the overall university experience and here you will be able to learn more about culture diversity. My experience at Tottori University for period remains an integral part of my journey towards academic excellence. You can also experience the same as you pursue your studies.



Omer Badi Mohammed Badi (Sudan)  
Master student at Graduate School of  
Agriculture, Tottori University, Japan

I really feel I am lucky enough to be a part of ABE initiative. This program allowed me to gain a master degree in one of beautiful and wonder Japanese universities as well as to do summer internship in great Japanese company. This program made me know better and deeper the Japanese people through interaction with them everywhere. They were always kind, well-organized, helpful and respectful people. In Japan I learned so many things such as punctuality arrangement.

I started my study of master's in agriculture at Tottori University in 2015. This university is well-equipped with facilities and professional staff. Joyfulness starts since welcome party of enrollment and continues up to graduation ceremony. We enjoyed fruitful classes and easily did our experiments by using highly equipped laboratories. Throughout the study life we enjoyed "Nihongo" and many events and festivals at the main campus or around the city. In addition to community activities such as planting and harvesting rice in Chizu to send to the orphans in Africa, participating in public activities, visiting and interacting with neighboring schools. Studying at a Japanese university is a good opportunity to create friendship and good relations with both Japanese and international students. Now we are approaching for graduation and really it seems time is flying.

I would like here to avail this opportunity to express my deeply thanks and gratitude for Japan and Japanese people for their kindness and hospitality. My thanks and gratitude is extended to my sponsor "JICA" for offering this chance to me to be a part of ABE initiative.

If you are lucky too, come and enjoy study at Tottori University!



