

ASHINAGA AFRICA
INITIATIVE

2019

19



ASHINAGA

ANNUAL
REPORT 2019

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INTRODUCTION

A Message from Our Founder

Last year, the name of the imperial era in Japan changed from Heisei to Reiwa. I see this transitional moment as an opportunity to think back to our achievements and forward to our goals. In the sixth year of the Ashinaga Africa Initiative (AAI), we have realized how important it is to equip students with the right set of skills before entering university. Because of this, we decided to invest more in pre-university preparation and sign an agreement with the city of Kyoto to host a new facility. Kyoto Kokorozashi-Juku is scheduled to open in 2021 and aims to provide tailored academic preparation to those students who will enroll in the AAI, as well as *kokorozashi* development support. We believe this establishment will nurture future young leaders, committed and ready to become changemakers.

Kyoto is an ancient city, home of some of the most important Japanese traditions. I hope AAI Scholars will use this opportunity to interact with this new environment and develop a global mindset, critical thinking and spirit of adaptability. The population of the African continent shows unprecedented growth. It is expected that the African continent will make up a quarter of the world's population by 2050. This is why I believe that the development of the African continent is crucial for the future of the whole world. When we announced the Ashinaga Africa Initiative, we encountered challenges and doubts from both inside and outside of Ashinaga Foundation. Many insisted that we should focus on supporting Japanese orphaned students. However, I believed our mission to be much bigger.

I think the most precious trait in humanity is altruism. This is based on selflessness and kindness to others. Ashinaga has been appealing to society to extend altruism through scholarships, educational support and emotional care. In order for people to be compassionate and empathetic, it is important to hear other's experiences. We can all learn a lot from the resilience of those around us. This is not limited to people of the same nationality, but across countries and cultures. There are orphaned students from all over the world who need support in order to unleash their full potential. We hope Ashinaga can trigger a cycle of kindness that expands to a global movement. This is why we created the Ashinaga Africa Initiative.

With the great achievement of 2019 in mind, we begin the first year of Reiwa with an even stronger commitment to supporting students through quality education. The Ashinaga Africa Initiative has improved every year and has now reached 176 Scholars from 47 different sub-Saharan African countries. I am confident that 2020 will be a successful year for Ashinaga. Join our cause and contribute to a world of equal access to quality education.



Yoshiomi Tamai
President and Founder of Ashinaga



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2019



January

International Tsudoï at Ashinaga France



February

End of Study Camp at Ashinaga Senegal



April

Recruitment for Anglophone AAI Candidates



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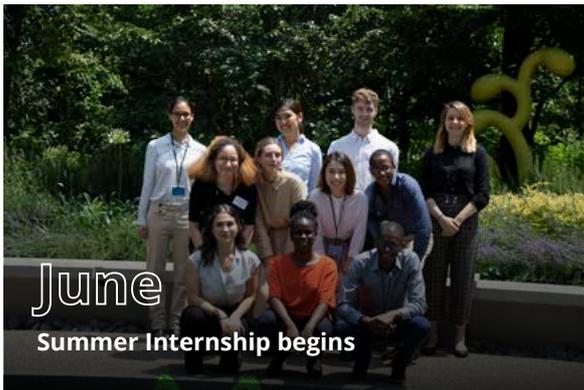
May
Bokin



July
International Tsudoï at
Ashinaga Brazil



August
TICAD



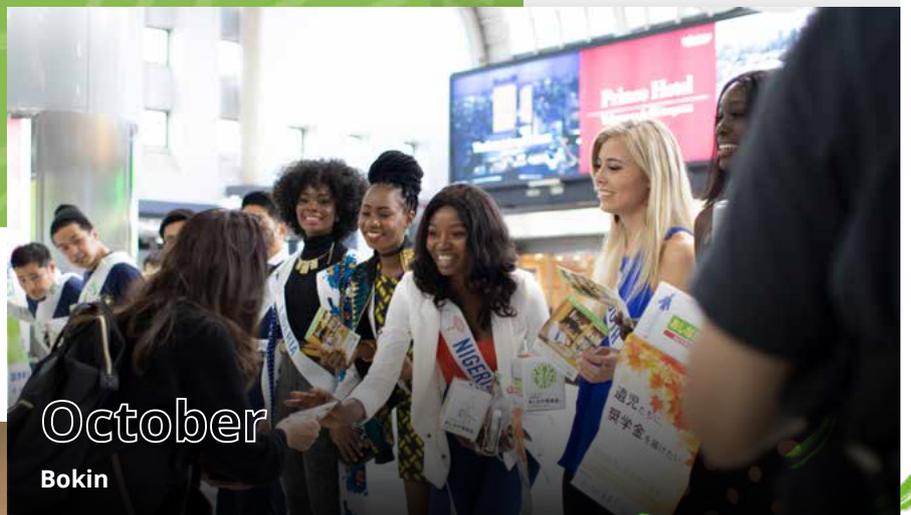
June
Summer Internship begins



September
University Tsudoï in Japan



March
International Student Tsudoï in Japan



October
Bokin



November
Tamai visits South Africa



December
International Tsudoï at Ashinaga UK

A Message from our Director

In its fifth year, the Ashinaga Africa Initiative has accomplished a series of outstanding achievements and positive learning opportunities. This year we saw our first AAI Scholars graduate from university and transition to the job market. All of them have pushed their limits to achieve academic excellency at school, while developing their professional skills and cultivating their personal ambitions. There is nothing that makes me prouder.

Ashinaga's participation in the international debate on sustainable development has also progressed this past year. Our President and Founder, Yoshiomi Tamai, has met with several Heads of States of African countries to promote our initiative and education as a right for every student, including those who have lost one or both parents. In late August, Ashinaga played an active role at the Seventh Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD7) in Yokohama. I am confident that the new connections and agreements made during that occasion will open new doors in 2020.

Since the beginning of the Ashinaga Africa Initiative, we have shared the commitment to reach each of the 49 sub-Saharan African countries. We have never been so close. In 2019 we opened the application process to 47 countries, and we are looking forward to selecting talented candidates from each of them. This will consolidate Ashinaga's pan-African identity and strengthen the multicultural environment, in which AAI Scholars grow.

Finally, significant progress has been made in the way we work with educational institutions worldwide. As the program develops, it is our aim to invest in sustainability, effective monitoring, and efficiency. Ashinaga was able to establish strong new partnerships with various universities in the UK, France, and Japan as well as a new partnership with the Brazilian government. In the past five years, these relations alone have secured more than 681 million Japanese Yen of donations in kind.

Yukie Seki

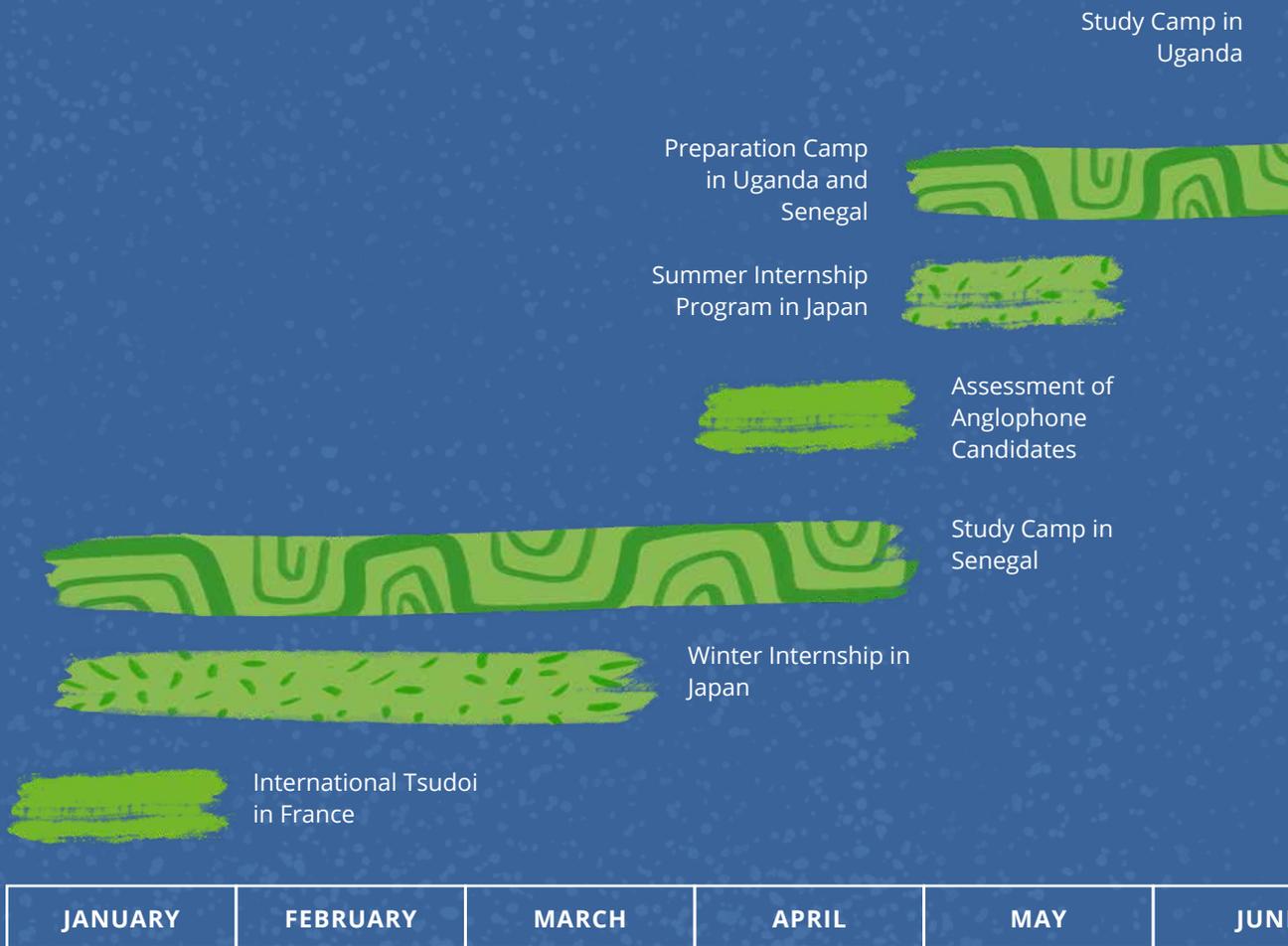


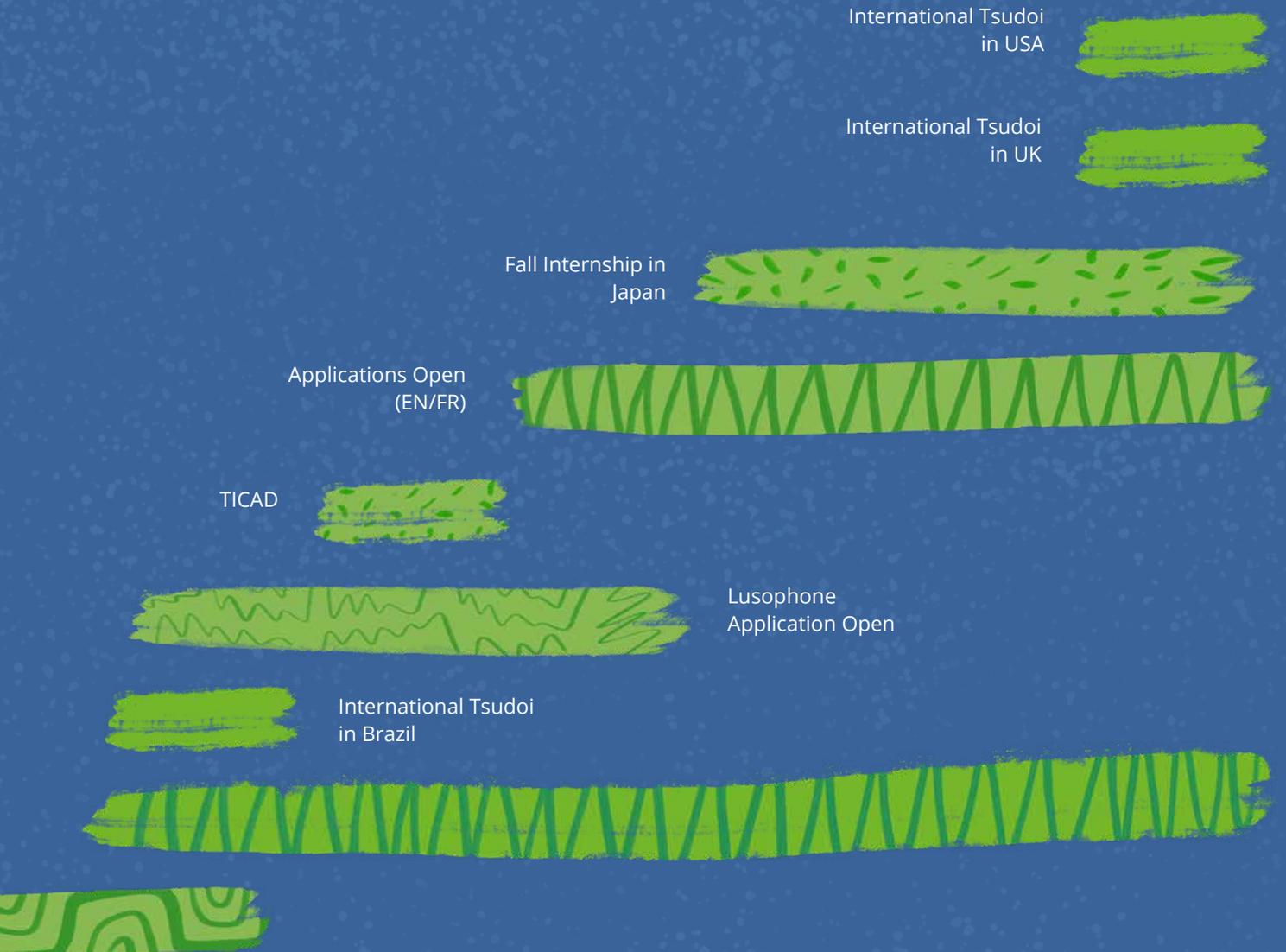
**Director of the Ashinaga Africa Initiative
Board Member of the Ashinaga Foundation**



“In 2019 we opened the application process to **47 countries**, and we are looking forward to selecting talented candidates from each of them.”

PROGRAM TIMELINE





E	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
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2

PROGRAM UPDATES

This year, we received
our **10,000th**
application since the AAI
was launched in 2014.

2019 has been an opportunity to reassess Ashinaga's strategy towards recruitment. The promotion and recruitment process prioritized reaching country specific targets over working to increase the total number of applications.

With a focus on targeting high achieving students across the continent, we worked with new and existing partners in all eligible countries throughout the promotion period. Thanks to the support of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, local ministries, charities, educational institutions, and media bodies, we have successfully expanded the reach of our program.

In addition, anglophone and francophone application periods have been aligned to provide better support to French-speaking students looking to study in English or Japanese. To do so, we postponed the promotion for francophone countries to the end of 2019 and invested our increased capacity during the year into developing our recruitment systems.

Thanks to the progress achieved this year, we were able to open applications for the 2020 Ashinaga Africa Initiative to 47 out of 49 countries. This brings us closer than ever to our goal of supporting talented young leaders from all across sub-Saharan Africa.

RECRUITMENT



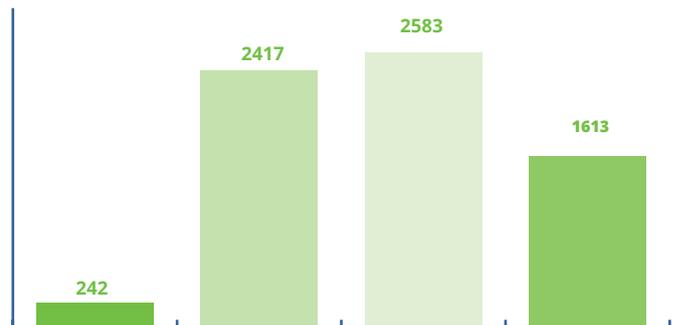
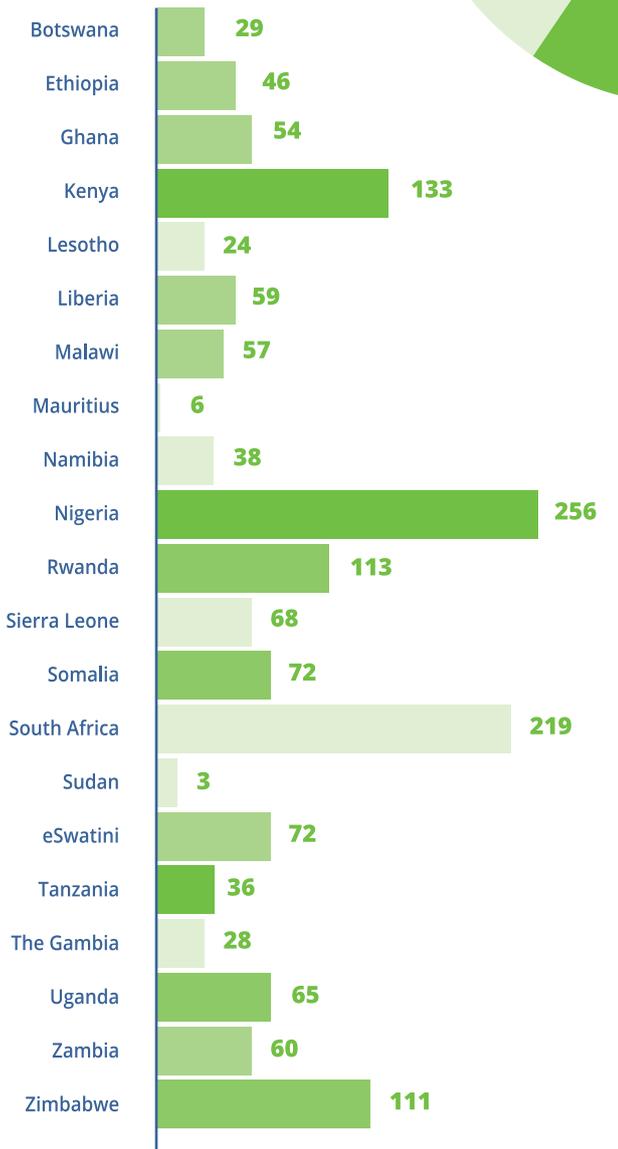
Country Representation

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Botswana | Cameroon |
| Cameroon | Comoros |
| Ethiopia | Ivory Coast |
| Gambia | Djibouti |
| Ghana | Gabon |
| Kenya | Guinea |
| Swaziland | Madagascar |
| Lesotho | Mali |
| Liberia | Mauritius |
| Malawi | Mauritania |
| Mauritius | Niger |
| Namibia | Central African Republic |
| Nigeria | Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| Rwanda | Republic of the Congo |
| Sierra Leone | Senegal |
| Somalia | Chad |
| South Africa | Togo |
| United Republic of Tanzania | |
| Uganda | |
| Zambia | Angola |
| Zimbabwe | Cape Verde |
| | Guinea Bissau |
| | Mozambique |
| Benin | |
| Burkina Faso | |
| Burundi | |



Anglophone

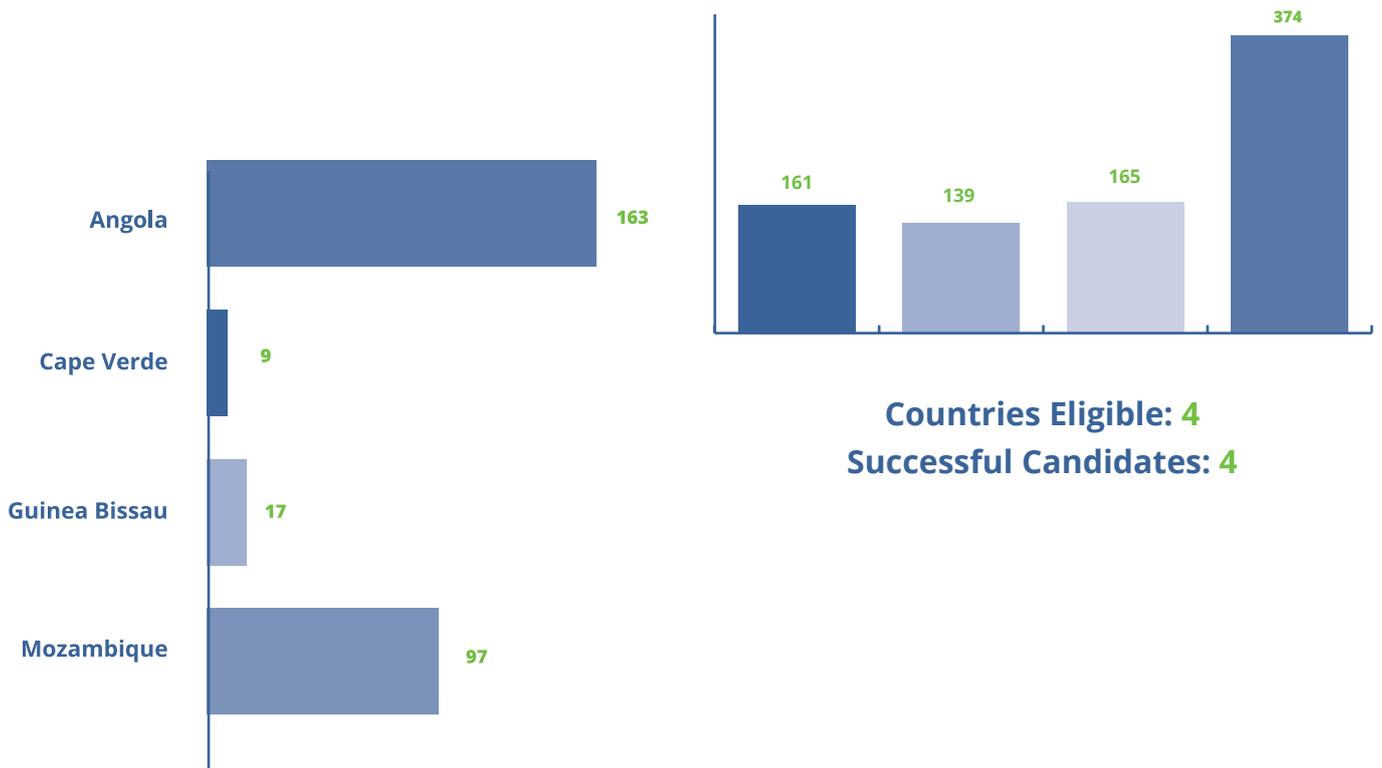
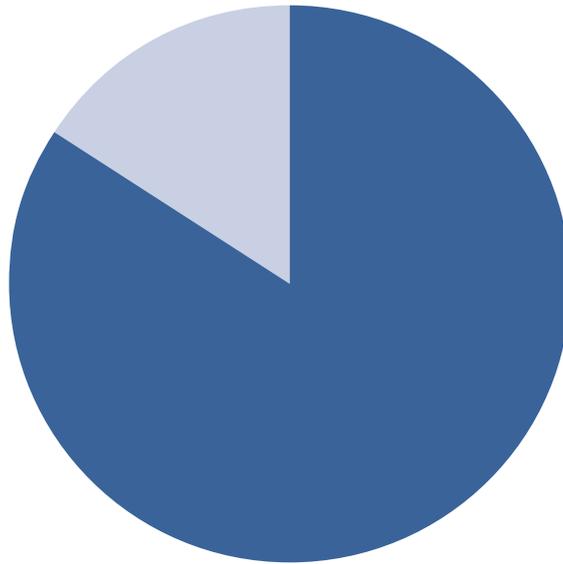
Total Applicants: 1613
Eligible Applicants: 937



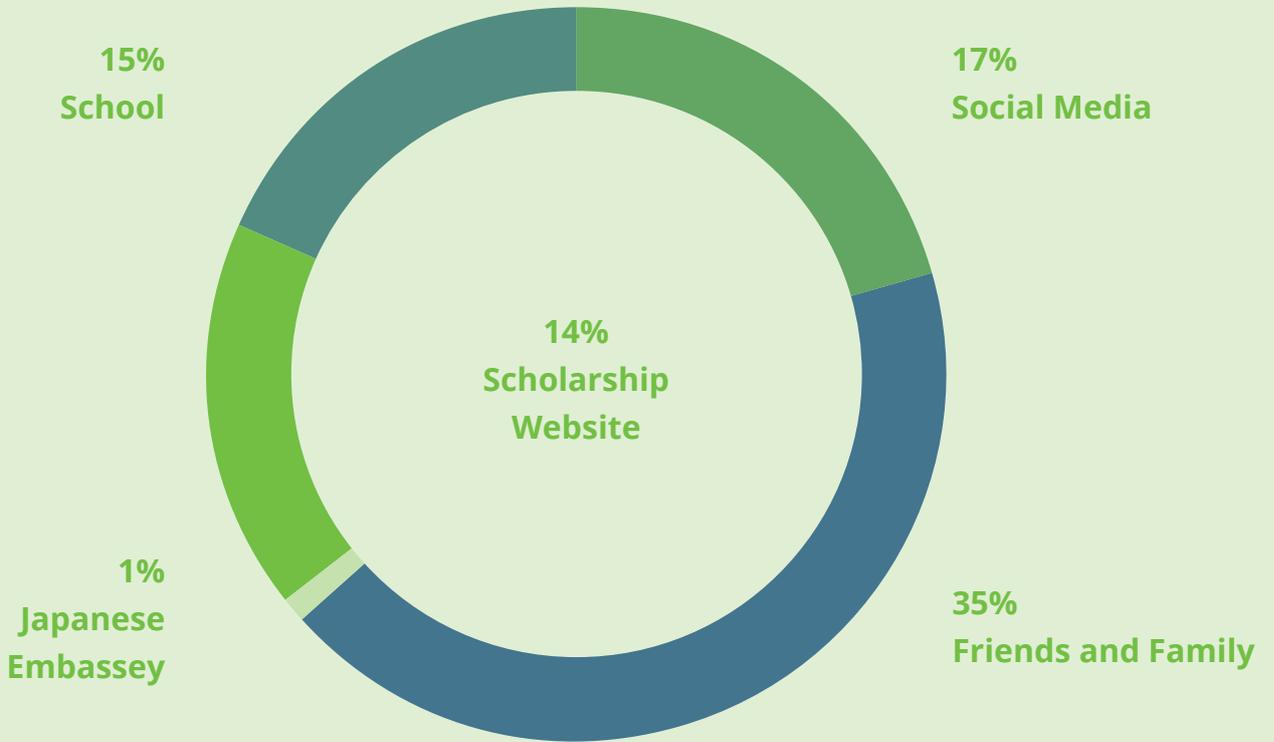
Countries Eligible: 22
Successful Candidates: 18

Lusophone

Total Applicants: 374
Eligible Applicants: 231



How did you find out about the program?



Gender balance



Our improved MEL system
 launched in April 2019, with
 a comprehensive framework
 of analysis involving 24
 indicators and 45 targets.

MONITORING
 EVALUATION AND
 LEARNING

In 2019 we overhauled our Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) program to allow us a more in-depth understanding of our initiative, the impact it is having, and how we can improve our work. We launched this review in October 2018, forming a new MEL team with 15 representatives spanning all offices and all stages of the AAI.

Our improved MEL system launched in April 2019, with a comprehensive framework of analysis involving 24 indicators and 45 targets. This allows us to continually work to improve the delivery of the AAI, to include feedback from all levels, to be transparent when talking about our work, and to clearly communicate our success to external stakeholders.

Our indicators can be divided into output level indicators and outcome level indicators. Output indicators measure the impact of our program on Scholars, while outcome indicators measure the extent and nature of AAI Graduates' impact on sub-Saharan Africa.

Output level indicators evaluate areas such as Ashinaga's success in recruiting suitable Scholars, their development of leadership skills across academic, professional, and personal fields, as well as the support that we are providing. Each indicator is SMART (Specific, Measurable, Available, Relevant, Time-bound) and quantified through targets and verifiable objective data. If all targets are met, we consider the Scholars as "positioned to become young leaders who tackle problems that they identify in sub-Saharan Africa" -- the AAI's Project Purpose.

After Scholars' graduation, we measure Outcome level indicators. These focus more on Graduates' professional careers and evaluate other factors such as their return to the African continent and the social impact they are having. These indicators are used to measure the AAI's overall goal, that "AAI Graduates are making a positive impact in their field or community in sub-Saharan Africa."



TICAD

The Tokyo International Conference on African Development, known as TICAD, is a conference that has been held by the Government of Japan since 1993. This year on August 28-30, TICAD 7 was co-hosted by the United Nations, United Nations Development Program, World Bank, and African Union Commission (AUC) at The Pacifico Center in Yokohama, Japan. Over 10,000 people were in attendance, including participants from 53 African countries, 52 development partner countries, 108 heads of international and regional organizations, plus many representatives of civil society and the private sector.

We hosted a booth in the conference center to promote the Ashinaga Africa Initiative. Those who stopped by were not only delegation members from African countries but also journalists interested in Ashinaga's activities.

During TICAD 7, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni had a meeting with President Tamai, an AAI Scholar from Uganda, and four Ashinaga staff members. Additionally, The First Lady of Madagascar, Mialy Rajoelina also invited President Tamai and an AAI Scholar from Madagascar for a meeting.

Prior to the conference, 15 Scholars participated in the official reception held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Scholars in their traditional clothing served as interpreters for the delegation from their home countries.

Through the many lectures and workshops offered, TICAD was an excellent opportunity for Scholars and staff to learn more deeply about African development directly from internationally-renowned professionals.



Professional Development at TICAD

TICAD 7 was a rare chance for diplomats, academics, entrepreneurs, and experts in the field of sustainable development to gather and discuss the present and future of Japan-Africa relations. This made it an invaluable opportunity for both Ashinaga and many AAI Scholars to expand their professional network and learn more about innovative projects implemented in the continent.

To prepare for the event, the Professional Network and Career Development (PND) team held a workshop open to all AAI Scholars studying in Japan. They provided a general overview of TICAD and included coaching on networking at events and pitching to potential partners or employers.

During the three days of TICAD 7, Scholars had access to all pavilions to meet with companies and organizations working in various sectors. One of the recent Graduates found his current job with a trading company from a connection made at the event. Other Scholars reported having secured internship positions and established professional mentoring relationships.

We are confident that TICAD was a great success for Ashinaga and we hope that all the connections made in August will lead to new accomplishments in 2020.



Ashinaga co-hosted the TICAD 7 Innovation Award

On August 26, Ashinaga held the TICAD 7 Innovation Award, alongside the Association of African Economy and Development (AFRECO) at Waseda University. Four experts on business in Africa judged six student pitches, ultimately choosing the two best pitches to win trips to the African country of their choice. Ashinaga Scholar Emmanuel Maseruka was one of the grand prize winners.

Emmanuel is a first-year student from Uganda studying International Liberal Arts at the University of Akita. His proposed project aims to redefine waste management in Kampala by introducing his own "GOMI Economy" model in Uganda. The GOMI Economy would contribute to two SDGs: sustainable cities and communities (#11) and responsible consumption and production (#12).

His aim is to teach citizens how to sort their trash and give them incentive to do so. In the proposed plan, registered households receive rubbish bags with unique QR codes. When the bag is collected and scanned, it sends points automatically to their mobile app, which they can use to gain discounts at partner organizations. Trash is then sold to recycling companies who can dump it in the authorized places. This plan, as well as the willingness of government organizations to partner with The Gomi Economy, impressed the judges.

Most recently, Emmanuel reached out to a company licensed by Wakiso Town Council to collect rubbish from households. The company confirmed that they will work with 100 households for the pilot project. GOMI is also working with a back-end software developer to have a prototype ready by March 2020. Another exciting update is that a weather-related institute is interested in partnering with GOMI partner supermarkets to predict what to stock based on the weather, with the aim of reducing food waste. While on his prize trip to Uganda, Emmanuel looks forward to meeting with all these organizations and finalizing contracts.



“I want to motivate young kids to have an open mind because we are moving into the digital world. **It’s essential for us to move with the times** and be technologically empowered.”

Name: Shirley
Nationality: South Africa
Country of Future Study: Japan
Intended Field of Study: Computer Science

The 2019 Ashinaga Uganda Study Camp ran from July to December with 22 students taking part in the program. Over the course of the camp, students faced academic and personal challenges which they overcame with poise and maturity.

A major component of the Study Camp is to prepare the students for the multiple standardized tests required for entry into university as well as to strengthen their overall academic level. Through internled classes, the students made leaps and strides in a range of subjects. This was evident in their high marks in SATs and IELTS, as well as the success that they had in being accepted into top universities.

Personal development is also a critical component of the Study Camp, both in guiding the students to become leaders and to get to know themselves better. In this regard, the community betterment trip was pivotal for enabling students to bond, learn how to work effectively as a team, and reflect on their strategies for personal growth. This trip will have an impact on student activities well into the 2020 Prep Camp as they worked on their ideas and plans for the community engagement project, in which they work to solve an issue within the Nansana community.

The Study Camp is the first step in Scholars’ professional careers. This camp set the foundation for future academic success and the leadership development that is necessary to have a positive impact in the African continent.

STUDY CAMP



PREPARATION CAMP

Preparation Camp focused on equipping students with the skills they need for their studies and life abroad. This year, the fifth AAI Cohort was the first to experience separate Preparation Camps in both Ashinaga Uganda, for Anglophone and Lusophone, and Ashinaga Senegal, for Francophone students. For two months, from May 6th to June 28th, a total of 51 students (33 anglophone and 18 francophone students) participated in these camps, and focused on practical preparation.

Beyond the main objectives of the camp, students were placed in several real-life situations to move from a theoretical to an applied learning approach. This included lab experiments for students studying science, focusing on challenges such as building a solar oven with limited resources. In Senegal, students were trained to facilitate design thinking workshops. They then led sessions with partner organizations on the theme of environmental protection. Students also focused on their professional development, with weekly work experience in companies operating in their desired future fields. This helped students expand their professional network and industry knowledge.

During Preparation Camp students also learnt about the education systems, culture, and traditions of their destination countries. As the last step of this preparation year journey, Ashinaga supported students with their visa applications for their future studies abroad. Thus, the end of the Preparation Camp marked the beginning of a new chapter for Ashinaga candidates as they became Scholars with new connections, new objectives, and new offices to accompany them along the way.

“During the Preparation Camp I developed my public speaking skills through the various leadership projects that drove me to interact with many people.”

Name: Noel
Nationality: Burundi
Country of Study: Japan
Field of Study: Business
Administration and Management

TEAM UPDATE

Student Relations

2019 was again a very fruitful year for the Student Relations Team. As well as having the pleasure to see our first eight students graduate, we also welcomed the fifth cohort of Scholars this year. This brings the total number of AAI Scholars to 141, studying in 11 different countries across the world, supported by 15 Student Relations Coordinators across five regional offices.

Along with this expansion, we also witnessed an evolution in the leadership opportunities AAI Scholars experienced this year. In Japan, Japanese Track Program Scholars won multiple Japanese speech competition awards, and non-Japanese track Scholars won various academic awards. TICAD 7 was a huge success for Ashinaga, as Emmanuel won the Innovation Award and Scholars were invited to the opening reception hosted by Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan.

On the other side of the planet, three Scholars in Europe were invited to attend the Women in Africa conference in Morocco which aimed to connect, equip, empower, and support women to use their ideas to change Africa and the world. In the UK, one Scholar had her research published in the prestigious British Medical Journal. A second UK student took part in an international conference in Russia, having been invited by the CTBTO (Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Organization) following a successful internship with them this summer. In Brazil, an AAI Scholar from Angola was accepted onto the highly competitive KMPG traineeship, which prepares talented economics students for a career in the financial services industry.

It is always a great pleasure for the Student Relations Coordinators to see AAI Scholars grow and prosper. For the upcoming year, SRC will continue to provide support to, and work with, the Scholars, and to ensure that they maximize their potential to become future leaders for Africa.

University Relations

The primary role of the University Relations Team (URT) is to secure joint scholarships and financial aid at universities. We are delighted to have secured support from universities worth over 681 million Japanese yen, with particular success in the US office. Not all of our support here comes from our partner universities directly—the Brazilian government provides support worth around 16 million Japanese yen per year.

In 2019, we increased the number of universities with whom we work closely. In the UK, we signed new partnerships with the University of Edinburgh, Royal Holloway, and the University of Central Lancashire. In Japan, under new partnership agreements we are proud to now send some Scholars to the highly regarded Waseda University and Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University. The US team visited new schools, including Colby, Bates, Bowdoin, Wellesley, Williams, and Amherst, to speak with admissions directors and explain Ashinaga's mission. In France, despite a significant rise in tuition fees for international students in public schools, 10 out of 11 AAI Scholars were accepted into prestigious public universities that granted them full exonerations from the new tariffs.

The second role of the University Relations Team is to match Scholars with suitable universities. We consider a wide range of factors, including the academic reputation of the university. 75% of new Scholars in the UK, EU, and Brazil received offers from the top 500 universities in the world. Additionally, all students in Japan received an offer from the top 5% of Japanese universities. This demonstrates both the academic excellence of AAI Scholars and the engagement from universities for the mission of the initiative.

Finally, we have secured access for Scholars to more postgraduate scholarship opportunities through our relationship with the HALI (High Achieving Low Income) Network. 2019 has been a very successful year for the University Relations Team and we are looking forward to building on this success.

“This internship was a **great experience** to learn how to work in a very busy and professional company. I learned how to **manage my time and lead project development**. It was also great chance for networking.”

Name: Friday
Nationality: Zambia
University: Yamanashi Gakuin
Field of Study: Economics and Business



Professional Network Development

As part of an AAI Scholar's development, the Professional Network Development (PND) team works with Scholars from the moment they enroll in the Preparation Year programs in Uganda and Senegal, all the way through to graduation from university. The PND team supports Scholars to develop their professional skills and networks in preparation for a bright career back on the continent.

Perhaps the most important component of a Scholar's professional development is the eight week or more Internship in Africa, which Scholars take part in during their undergraduate degree to fulfill the requirements of the Initiative. This internship enables Scholars to deepen their understanding of the various and complex socio-economic needs in Africa, enhance their professional skills, and develop their network connections with organizations or companies working in and for Africa.

2019 saw significant progress made across the board. The PND team (formed in 2017 and encompassing members from each regional office) once again expanded Ashinaga's network of professional partners to increase the availability of internship opportunities in Africa. We also provided career development support to Scholars in collaboration with the Student Relations Team (SRT). As a result, this year 36 Scholars successfully found an internship either through Ashinaga or by themselves, and went on to gain experience across various industries, such as agriculture, civil engineering, and finance.

26 of these internships were in Africa, and Scholars travelled to 23 different countries (17 in Africa and six outside of Africa) to develop their professional skills and networks. Scholars consistently rated their internships highly relevant to their future plans, skills and network development, as well as highly in overall satisfaction. AAI Scholars interned with the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), the Bugesera International Airport Project, and Partners in Health Rwanda. In 2020 we will focus more on extending the support we provide Scholars through the development of an AAI-wide professional skills curriculum, working towards a more standardized and high-quality set of modules delivered across all offices.

Friday

ECOM West Africa Internship Report

In my internship with ECOM West Africa, a leading privately licensed cocoa buying company, my main role was leading project development. This involved research and evaluation of already existing information to find out what was working and what was not working. In the first month of my internship, I spent most of my time in the field collecting data and learning from field staff about the company's work. During that time I had chance to interact with the farmers and conduct interviews to get the information I needed to work on assigned projects. The time spent in the field was important to learn more about the company's operations and about the culture of my host country, Ghana.

This internship was a great experience for me to learn how to work in professional and fast paced company. I learned how to manage my time and lead projects. It was also great to develop my networking skills. Through this internship I learned how to work on projects with little supervision while still delivering quality work.

This internship helped me to narrow down my interests within agriculture. I now hope to do research on the relationship between agriculture and microfinance. This will be the theme I will pursue when I go to graduate school. All in all, it was great experience.

"I am working for an organization called ARCA which is based in Sendai, Japan. ARCA designs, produces, installs and maintains solar generators."

My role is to focus on how to sell our products to markets in Africa. This requires an understanding of markets in the African continent in addition to the know-how and network to make a connection between them and Japan. Expanding my knowledge about different cultures and economies, a skill I developed in the international relations part of my Liberal Arts degree, ended up being extremely valuable to my future.

Name: Hillary
Nationality: Kenya
University: Doshisha University
Field of Study: Liberal Arts



In 2019, for the first time, eight Scholars graduated from the AAI. In addition to graduating from an Ashinaga-sponsored university degree and meeting all of the course requirements, Scholars submit an Ashinaga Proposal, in which they explore a problem they identify in their community, country, or continent. The proposal provides a potential solution that could be implemented once Scholars return home after graduation. Scholars also complete at least one high quality internship on the African continent.

Ashinaga is aware there are many pathways to make an impact, and that the competition for jobs in many African countries is fierce. We provide a grace period of five years after graduation before graduates must return to the African continent. This allows them to gain more academic qualifications or work experience before returning home.

Six months after graduating from the AAI, four graduates are now working in the country where they studied, three are pursuing higher education in their country of undergraduate study, and one has returned to their home country.

Ashinaga is excited to track the progress of current graduates and welcome 26 new graduates to the community in 2020.

List of 2019 Graduates

Name of Graduate	Country of Origin	Country of Study	Major/ Degree
Haftu	Ethiopia	UK	Biomedical Science
Suzan	Tanzania	UK	Medical Physiology with Therapeutics
Darie Fleur	Cameroon	France	Political Science
Noella	Democratic Republic of Congo	France	Healthcare and Sanitary Science
Hillary	Kenya	Japan	Liberal Arts
Tahirisoa	Madagascar	France	Biology
Beya	Republic of Congo	France	Mechanical Engineering
Angelique	Rwanda	USA	International Business

INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

This year, we accepted approximately 100 interns* and volunteers from 48 universities all over the world* to our Internship Programs in Japan, Uganda, and Senegal. In April, we were honored to receive the Gold Standard Internship Host Award from the University of Oxford.

In Japan, interns selected from 11 different countries worked with staff members to participate in a variety of projects. They contributed to some of Ashinaga's domestic and international achievements. This included helping to send Japanese students on the Overseas Training Program in Italy, creating, translating, and sending out thank you cards from the Uganda Rainbow House to donors in Japan, designing the layout for the new AAI Leadership Framework and creating a brochure to promote the Ashinaga Internship Program.

In Senegal, interns helped run the first Preparation Camp for francophone Candidates. In Uganda, interns launched a more English-intensive curriculum with smaller class sizes, allowing for more one-on-one teaching. As a result, AAI Scholars' IELTS and SAT scores rose in 2019 compared to previous years.

Julia - Marketing Intern in Tokyo - Fall 2019

I chose to intern with Ashinaga because I wanted to contribute to Ashinaga's compassionate efforts, providing educational support to orphaned students. I strongly support the impactful work to help children and young adults overcome emotional trauma and advance their education. The unique experience of being in Japan and working for an organization such as Ashinaga allowed me to follow my passion for people, travel, and design. I also had the opportunity to meet a group of unique people who are working together to use their various skills to improve the lives of others. As someone once told me, "there is no meaning in life until you put meaning there, and one way you can do this is to work towards making the world a better place." During my time at Ashinaga I gained a new valuable experience and was able to grow both as an individual and as a designer with the support and guidance from the amazing supervisors in the Marketing Department.

Japan:

30 interns

from 21 universities in
11 countries

Senegal:

17 interns

from 16 universities in
5 countries

Uganda:

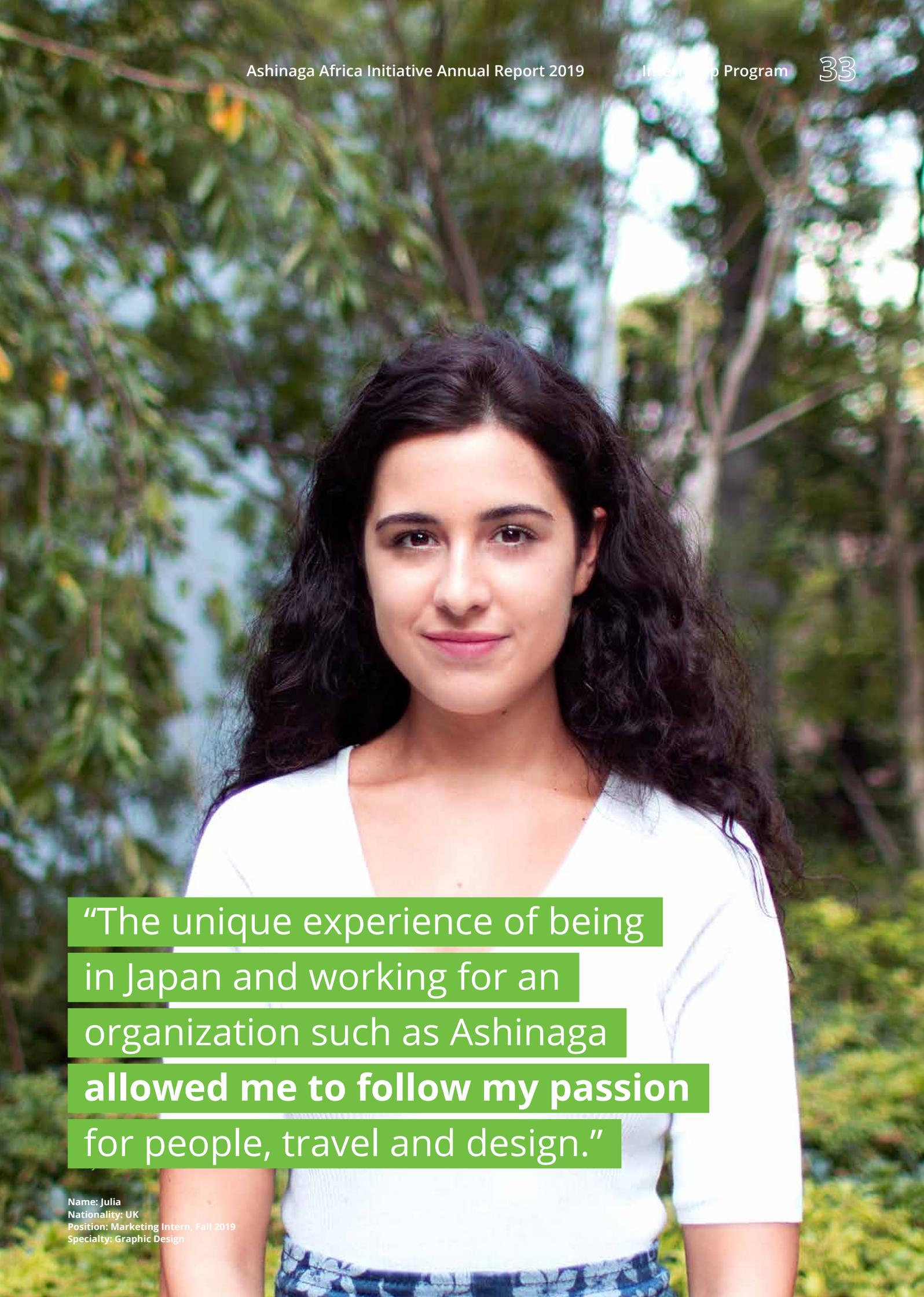
27 interns

from 20 universities in
10 countries

*Country is based on home university location, not on intern's nationality

*The total number of interns is 118, which includes two Tokyo Kokoro-Juku interns and 40 *tsudoji* international volunteers

*Interns came from 48 different institutions. Each university is only counted once, though we may have had more than one intern from that school.



“The unique experience of being in Japan and working for an organization such as Ashinaga **allowed me to follow my passion** for people, travel and design.”

Name: Julia
Nationality: UK
Position: Marketing Intern, Fall 2019
Specialty: Graphic Design



OFFICE UPDATES

Japan

The highlight of 2019 was welcoming 18 new Scholars to Japan, bringing the total number of Scholars studying in Japan and Australia to 59. Two Scholars entered Waseda University and another Scholar began her studies in Economics at Keio University: two of the top universities in Japan. One Scholar successfully graduated from university and secured a job in Japan. We are confident that this will help develop his professional and personal skills before returning to the African continent to implement his future plans.

Last year, we launched the Japanese Track Program, in which Scholars first attend Japanese language school for intensive learning before entering universities in Japan, studying completely in Japanese. Three Scholars from this program have successfully entered university, and seven more Scholars are preparing to enroll next year.

This year, the Mentorship program was piloted in Japan, aiming to support the professional development of Scholars. By connecting them to mentors, Scholars developed their professional skillsets, focusing on qualities laid out in the AAI Leadership Framework as well as their own personal professional goals. The four-month-long pilot was launched with 11 Scholars and 11 mentors between August and November. The mentors, who are African professionals in Japan, and mentees jointly developed their objectives and reviewed their progress through the meetings.

AISA (the Ashinaga International Students Association) also played an active role in providing new opportunities to our Scholars in Japan. They launched the Visionary Networking Program (VNP), a program that connects AISA students to different professional opportunities and builds meaningful relationships with field experts and company representatives. AISA invited three African professionals working in Tokyo for their first VNP meeting. Participants learned a great deal from them, and AISA hopes to organize many more meetings in the coming year.

Finally, the 2019 AAI International Tsudoi focused on developing Scholars' leadership skills and entrepreneurial spirit, as well as maintaining their connection with the African continent. Scholars strengthened personal and professional skills needed to accomplish their Goals. They were inspired by African guest speakers who started companies while they were still university students. Scholars gave presentations about internships they had undertaken and presented their Ashinaga Proposals. *Tsudoi* also gave them an opportunity to work with each other to further develop their projects, as well as to discuss topics critical to their development as future leaders on the African continent.

Name: Patience

Nationality: Uganda

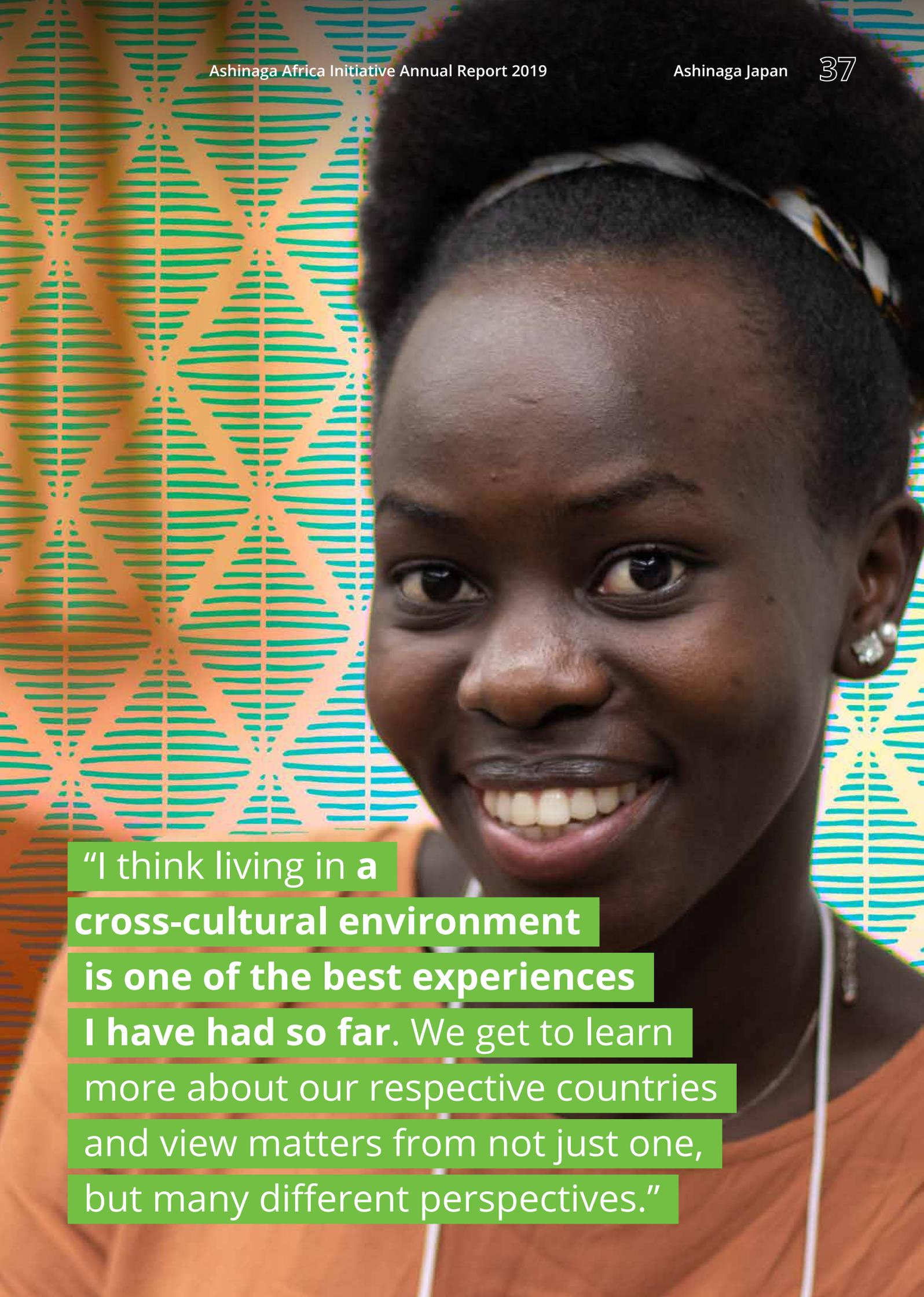
University: Kwansei Gakuin

Field of Study: International Relations

The Ashinaga Africa Initiative is a leadership program that is focused on not only supporting academics but is very holistic. Though it is my first time in Japan, I have been able to achieve tremendous personal growth. Now, I am able to manage my time very well. I have also learned how to speak some Japanese, which has made communication with my new friends easier. I have made many friends from different countries, and I think living in a cross-cultural environment is one of the best experiences I have had so far. We get to learn more about our respective countries and view matters from not just one, but many different perspectives. It also helps us appreciate different cultures.

Now, I want to learn even more about other people, cultures and society. I realize how beautifully different we can be as people, and how little we know about a place until we actually travel there. I am studying international relations because I want to interact with people from different communities and backgrounds. Currently, I am working on various class projects with my classmates, and it is very fun and fulfilling to be able to interact with such a diverse group of people.

I reside at the Ashinaga Kokoro Juku in Kobe with other Ashinaga Scholars, and everyone here is very kind. The Kokoro-Juku is a very comfortable space, where I can get firsthand assistance from Ashinaga staff and fellow Scholars. Being in a completely different environment from what I was initially accustomed to was challenging. I experienced culture shock, as no amount of preparation is enough to live in a country you have never been in, but as human beings, we adapt very quickly. Soon, with the assistance of many Scholars and my Student Relations Coordinator, I found my footing and am now truly enjoying my university life abroad.



"I think living in a cross-cultural environment is one of the best experiences I have had so far. We get to learn more about our respective countries and view matters from not just one, but many different perspectives."

Uganda

This year, Ashinaga announced the building of the Kyoto Kokorozashi-Juku, scheduled to open in 2021. This institute will help AAI Scholars prepare before enrolling into university. For Ashinaga Uganda, this was a chance to rethink our role within the Ashinaga Africa Initiative and the aspects we should focus on. In 2018, our students in Uganda had very precise goals. We divided the Study Camp into three semesters. Each of the semesters focused on different areas including selecting their degrees and taking examinations, developing their academic abilities, and cultivating their leadership skills.

Notably, we realized the importance of preparing for externally certified tests necessary for college such as SAT and IELTS. When selecting interns to deliver the classes, we prioritized people with teaching and curriculum-building skills. We have recorded an increase in the quality of interns in recent years, proved by reports from students and staff. It is also thanks to their dedication that all students were admitted to university in 2019. One of Ashinaga's aims for students is for them to develop their *kokorozashi* – a Japanese concept about personal vision and aspiration of how to initiate change, innovation, and development for the betterment of others – and to work hard to make those ambitions into a reality. In Ashinaga Uganda we share this commitment. This is why our curriculum supported students in better understanding the meaning of *kokorozashi*, as well as guidance on how to identify what theirs is.

Lastly, I would like to share a small but significant event. Ashinaga's origins in Uganda began with the establishment of the Ashinaga Uganda Rainbow House. The Rainbow House was opened in 2003 as a facility to provide education and emotional care to orphaned children in Uganda. One of the students who received a scholarship from the Uganda Rainbow House to access high school was selected to join the Ashinaga Africa Initiative in 2019. For Ashinaga Uganda it was a groundbreaking moment where our two main projects were bridged. It also served as a motivational example to all other children in the Rainbow House hoping to enroll into prestigious universities worldwide.

As an organization working in Uganda, together with all the students from sub-Saharan African nations, we realize the impact our work has in children's bright futures. This year was another year full of opportunities to realize the significance of the work we do.

Yoshihiro Imamura
Director of Ashinaga Uganda

Name: Martin

Nationality: Zambia

Country of Future Study: USA

Intended Field of Study: Chemical Engineering

As a child, my biggest ambition was to be an architect because of my late father. Growing up, I saw Zambia's plight for economic freedom and self-sustainability as a pressing issue for my country's development. Seeing the vast mineral resources that my country boasts not being adequately used to propel people's livelihoods, motivated me to pursue chemical engineering. Despite my family's persistent financial struggles, I completed high school with academic distinctions in 2017. However, I thought getting a higher education would be impossible for me.

Early this year, I received either rejections or partial scholarship offers from several universities and nearly gave up on my dream of studying chemical engineering. But then I applied for the Ashinaga Africa Initiative and was accepted after undergoing a rigorous selection process. My ambitions have since been reignited. Having chosen the United States as my destination country, I now have a clearer vision of future. Ashinaga has elevated my thinking and sight – *kokorozashi* – while actively engaging my whole being in building a better leader within myself.

Through the Study Camp, Ashinaga has challenged me to think in ways I had never thought to be possible. For example, I used to think of pursuing higher education abroad and never returning to Africa and leading a "better life" far from home. However, I have realized it is possible to create opportunities in Africa that I would try to seek elsewhere. I want to pay-it-forward to future generations by making the change I hope to see. Consequently, as a young leader, I have come to understand the real meaning of coexistence by staying with students, staff, and interns from different countries across the globe in the Kokoro-Juku. As a Ugandan in the Kokoro-Juku, I am now able to identify challenges the community faces and find innovative solutions to them with a positive mindset and character. I want to send all thanks to Ashinaga.

A young Black man with a short haircut is smiling broadly, looking towards the camera. He is wearing a blue button-down shirt. The background is a vibrant, colorful pattern of blue, purple, and pink zig-zag lines. To the right, a white shirt is partially visible. In the bottom left corner, a green jacket is also partially visible.

“Through the Study Camp,
Ashinaga has challenged
me to think in ways I had
never thought to be possible.”

Senegal

2019 saw Ashinaga Senegal shift its attention towards consolidating and developing our programs following years of continuous growth since 2015. We have looked to strengthen the foundation from which we recruit and support candidates in preparation for the bigger changes coming to the AAI in 2021.

After several years of using different recruitment timelines for anglophone and francophone countries, we committed to their alignment in 2019. By pushing back the francophone timeline by six months we have facilitated the integration of francophone students into the English language track, allowing more students to study in Japan, the UK, or the USA. We are also now better able to support applicants in bilingual countries such as Cameroon, Mauritius, and Seychelles. This change means we did not recruit any francophone students in 2019, and while this was not an easy decision to make, we have worked hard to make the most of this transition period.

In addition to the development of our local scholarship programs, we have focused on developing a comprehensive preparation year curriculum in collaboration with Ashinaga Uganda. Built around a core of academic development, university counseling, and leadership development through community engagement, this curriculum will ensure all candidates have the tools and skills needed to succeed once they begin their university studies as Ashinaga Scholars. Beyond this curriculum, the alignment of anglophone and francophone timelines has given us time to invest in our recruitment systems. This has allowed us to improve efficiency whilst developing a more holistic assessment process, including a final two-day assessment to be implemented across all countries. We are now better placed to select students who demonstrate the potential to become leaders committed to initiating change and development in their communities, countries, and continent.

We are looking towards 2020 and the arrival of our next cohort of students with great anticipation. Thanks to the generous support of our donors and through our continued collaboration with Ashinaga offices across the world we have everything in place to step up to the challenges that lie ahead as we continue working towards the mission of the Ashinaga Africa Initiative and the goals of the Ashinaga Foundation as a whole.

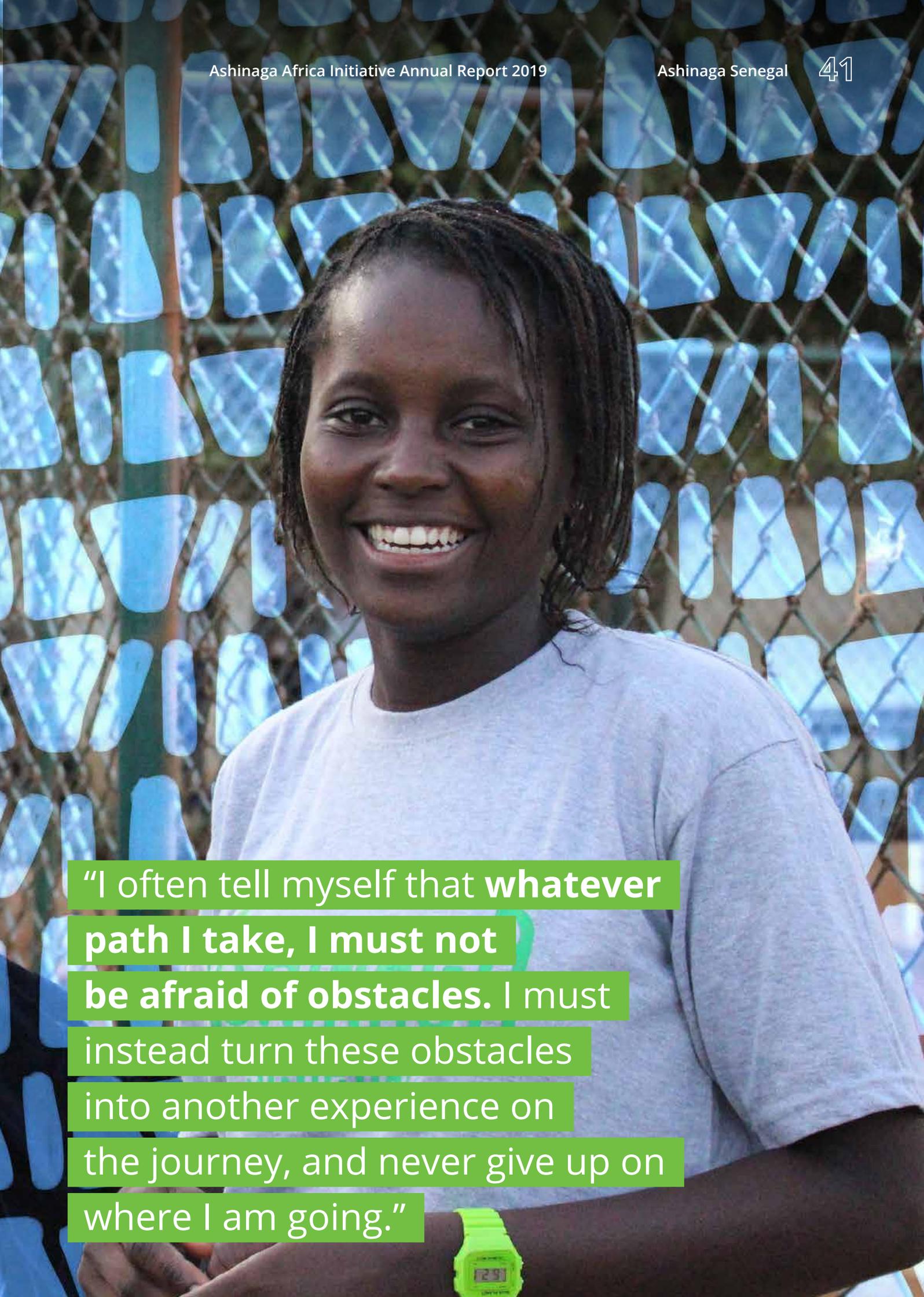
Nicolas Carter
Director of Ashinaga Senegal

Name: Adama
Nationality: Guinea
Country of Future Study: France
Intended Field of Study: Electrical Engineering

My name is Adama, I am 20 years old and I come from Conakry, Guinea. When I was young, I wanted to be a banker because it seemed like a popular, well-paying job. It was only when I was at high school that I decided to pursue engineering because I saw very few female engineers around me, and I wanted to make a difference.

I have always been dismayed by the high mortality rate caused by accidental electrocutions in Guinea. This has inspired me to become an electrical engineer in order to draw attention to the importance of installing high quality, reliable, domestic electrical equipment. I am sure that my choice of studies and the excellent education available to me in France will allow me to make this difference for future generations.

At Ashinaga, I found huge value in relationships with others. Living in a big community can be challenging, but it allows for greater openness and a broader outlook. Of course, I miss my family, but I know that I will return to my country and create my own business, as I promised myself. I often tell myself that whatever path I take, I must not be afraid of obstacles. I must instead turn these obstacles into another experience on the journey, and never give up on where I am going.



"I often tell myself that **whatever path I take, I must not be afraid of obstacles.** I must instead turn these obstacles into another experience on the journey, and never give up on where I am going."

USA

2019 has been an incredible year for Ashinaga USA! December marked the five-year anniversary of Ashinaga USA's establishment. We have come a long way from where we were in 2014, when there were only three Ashinaga students at universities. Now we have 184 Ashinaga Africa Initiative (AAI) Scholars around the world and 22 at universities in the USA.

This year was also the year we had our first AAI Scholar graduate; Angelique is now gaining valuable professional experience in the United States before she returns to her home country to apply her international development degree by working with education and health programs for other young people. Furthermore, nine Scholars secured fully or partially funded internships and research opportunities in the United States and sub-Saharan Africa. These successes show the exceptional quality and hard work of our Scholars, but they are also a testament to the Student Relations Team in the US, who work tirelessly to ensure that our Scholars are supported and best placed to shine.

On the university side, Ashinaga's University Relations Team have visited seven universities this year and made countless calls to build our networks. As a result, earlier in the year all six students in the 2018 cohort secured places at prestigious US universities. Our students have been awarded scholarships to a total value of over 1.5 million dollars. Work is already well underway to place the 2019 cohort and we are comfortably on target to meet our goals.

Ashinaga USA has also had an important development in our infrastructure. In 2018 we decided to renew our efforts towards fundraising and external engagement and relocate to New York City. I am happy to say that we have completed this process and are currently developing our strategic plan for the coming year.

With a new office and a new vision, in many ways 2020 represents a new start for Ashinaga USA. 2020 will be the year where we will continue working hard to maintain the results we are achieving while we expand and work towards development activities that will help secure the future of the AAI for generations of Scholars to come.

Luke Happle
Director of Ashinaga USA

Name: Oneile

Nationality: Botswana

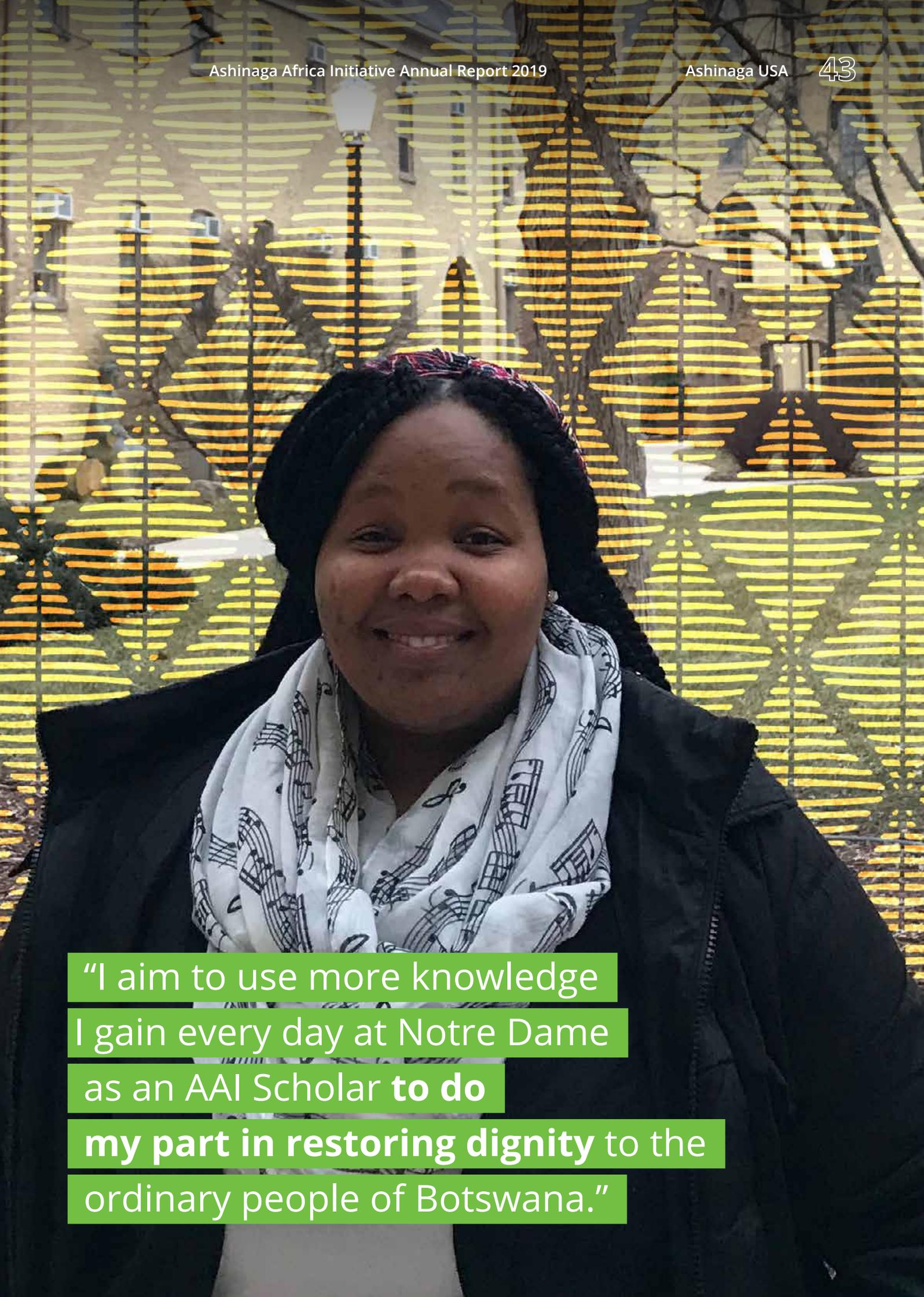
Country of Study: USA

Field of Study: Political Science

Botswana is known for great economic success, rule of law as well as Peace and tolerance of all people. However, it is among the top 3 nations with the highest income inequality according to the Gini coefficient. In Botswana, I come from Molepolole, which is the largest village in the country and the income disparity is noticeable even within the village. There are some areas that are known to be for the rich; the houses are bigger, well-structured and in most occasions few people live in each house. Other parts of the village, however, such as the ward I come from (Phuthadikobo ward), has poor housing and overpopulation because there are too many people living in one home as they cannot not afford to find their own places.

My village is not an anomaly; this is the reality that most Batswana are faced with in villages, towns and cities. This is the main motivation behind all that I study here at Notre Dame. I have experienced first-hand the pain of lacking access to basic resources which others have in abundance while my nation is celebrated for the great economic success it is achieving. But the success does not trickle down to the ordinary Motswana.

In my International Development classes for example, we talk a lot about integral human development: the holistic development of the human person covering all aspects of life. It can also be simply restated as dignity of the human person. Economic development is a big part of that and by depriving poor people of that we are essentially robbing them of their dignity. I aim to use the knowledge I gain every day at Notre Dame through this Ashinaga scholarship to do my part in restoring dignity to the ordinary Motswana.



"I aim to use more knowledge I gain every day at Notre Dame as an AAI Scholar **to do my part in restoring dignity** to the ordinary people of Botswana."

France

2019 marked the third year of Ashinaga France's continued operation. Although based in Paris, our office also supports two Scholars studying in Czech Republic, one in Lithuania, and two in the Netherlands, amounting to a total of 34 Scholars by the end of 2019. For the first time this summer, we celebrated the accomplishments of four Scholars who graduated from university. These students remain a part of the Ashinaga community as Graduates, while they pursue further studies in Europe, or return to their home countries. We wish them well on the next chapter of their adventure and look forward to learning about their eventual contribution to their home countries.

We also had the pleasure of welcoming 12 new Scholars in August. We successfully acquired 10 out of 11 full tuition exonerations for our new cohort of Scholars attending public universities in France, despite the increase in foreign student fees.

We held two large *tsudo*, or student gatherings, for our Scholars this year. In January we hosted the annual "all Scholar" *tsudo*, bringing together all cohorts to exchange with one another. In August we hosted a separate *tsudo* for only second year Scholars in order to focus more closely on them to process what they have learned after their first full year abroad, and to train them on how mentor the new cohort. In the Scholars' last year, they will also be invited to a "final" *tsudo*, in which we accompany them to create a plan for life after graduation.

Over the summer, AAI Scholars pushed themselves to find opportunities to grow professionally. Eight Scholars found their own internships, one Scholar was matched to an internship by Ashinaga, and thirteen other Scholars found jobs or volunteering opportunities. Increasingly more Scholars are finding a balance between their studies and extra-curricular activities, which give them the chance to develop their leadership skills outside of an academic structure.

Next year we plan to continue our accompaniment of our 34 Scholars' leadership development, as well as to grow our partnership and network engagement within Europe. We look forward to what the new year brings for our Scholars and the AAI.



Samantha Smith
Director of Ashinaga France

Name: Sylvestre

Nationality: Senegal

Country of Study: France

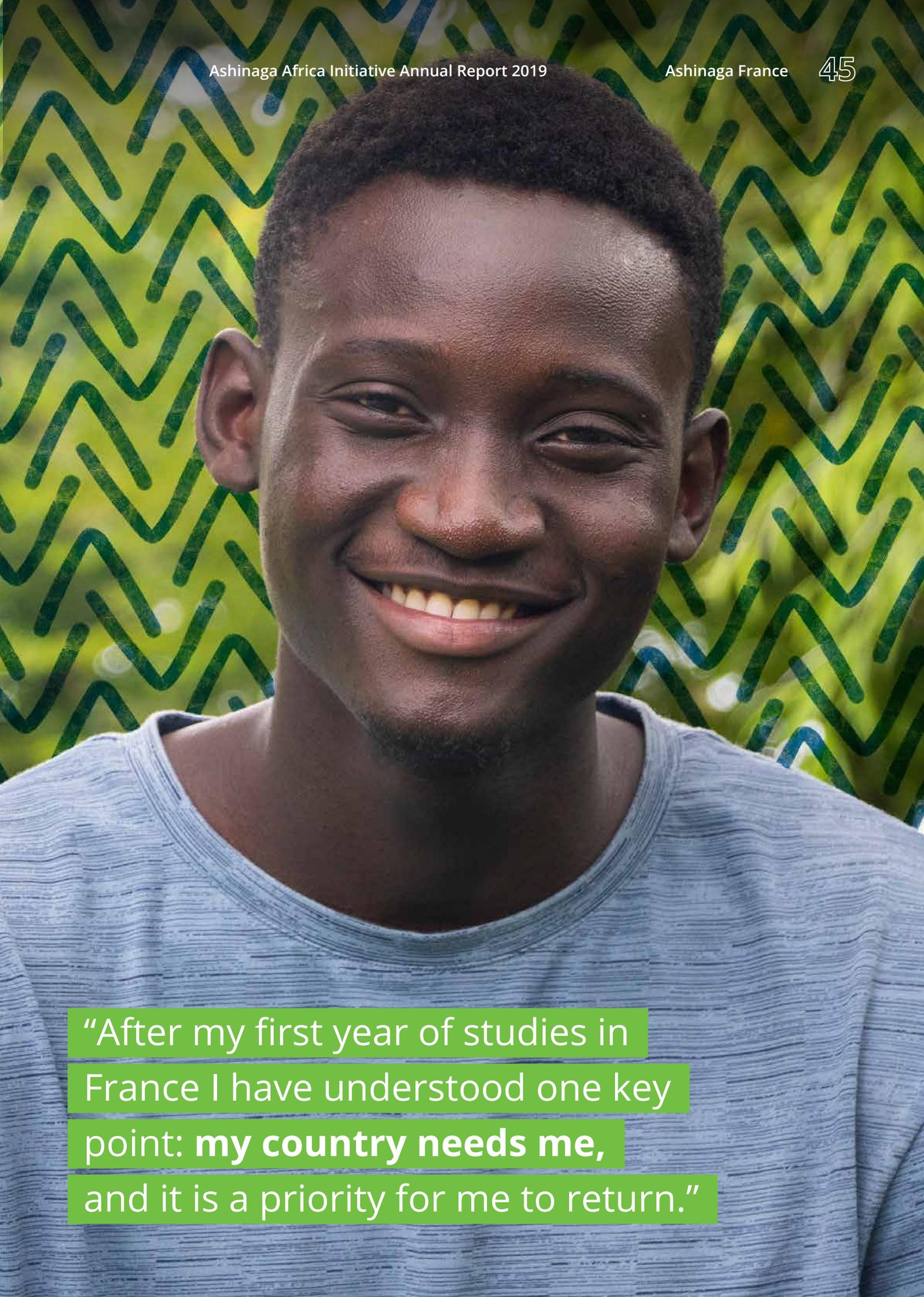
Field of Study: Political Science

Since the beginning of my journey with Ashinaga, I have formed a clearer idea of what I want in my future. The Ashinaga preparation year enabled me to create a clear vision of my objectives and a better definition of what it is to be a leader. After my first year of studies in France I have understood one key point: my country needs me, and it is a priority for me to return.

During my first year studying abroad, I developed an interest in technological innovations and the start-up ecosystem that is spreading throughout Africa. I had the opportunity to participate in a conference in Paris called AfroBytes, and learned about investment opportunities offered by new technologies in Africa. More specifically, I learned about artificial intelligence and blockchain and met many Senegalese working in this sector.

In addition, this first year of studies also allowed me to feel even more of a part of the Ashinaga community. I attended a student *tsudo* last August in Japan. It was fascinating to exchange and discuss with fellow Ashinaga Scholars on various global topics and work collectively to find solutions. It was also such a pleasure to visit the Ashinaga headquarters and the Kokoro-Juku dormitory.

Participating in this type of event plays a large part in the development of my leadership skills as every new experience forces me to reflect on how to become a better leader. I do my best to develop such skills in my daily life, such as supporting and offering guidance to my kohai (younger Ashinaga Scholar) as much as I can.

A young Black man with short, dark hair is smiling warmly at the camera. He is wearing a light blue, textured t-shirt. The background is a vibrant green and yellow pattern of stylized, zigzagging lines. The text is overlaid on the bottom left of the image, with each line of text on a separate green rectangular background.

“After my first year of studies in France I have understood one key point: **my country needs me,** and it is a priority for me to return.”

UK

2019 has been a breakthrough year for the UK office. Now in our third year, we have shifted our focus from building our foundations, which centered on student support and administration matters, to external engagement. This includes the registration of the UK office as a charity – registered charity number: 1183750 – as well as us starting to develop a fundraising infrastructure.

To date, our fundraising has focused on partnerships with universities, with over £585,000 pledged from UK universities. We are happy to have created new joint-scholarship programs with the University of Edinburgh, the University of Central Lancashire, and Royal Holloway, University of London. Moving forward, our fundraising strategy aims to increase and diversify our income streams, with the long-term aim of financing all activities in the UK from funds raised in the UK.

Our proudest achievement is that to date, all AAI Scholars are on track to successfully graduate and complete the Initiative. This fact is even more impressive when you consider that 86 per cent of UK AAI Scholars are enrolled at one of the top 500 universities in the world. AAI Scholars' academic performance is also a source of great pride, with 45 per cent achieving a first, 35 per cent a 2:1 and the remaining 20 per cent a 2:2. These achievements reflect both the hard work and potential of Scholars and the excellent support provided to them by the Student Relations Team. Finally, it was a great honor for us to attend the ceremonies of our first two graduating students, both of whom have returned to sub-Saharan Africa and started the next stage of their journeys.

We are working hard so that 2020 represents the first year of the next chapter of the UK office, with our fundraising launch and the continued development of our student programming. At our launch event in 2017, President Tamai said that Ashinaga is not a normal charity, we are a movement. We could not have achieved what we have so far without the support of others, and it is with open arms that I invite you to join this movement and support our work moving forward.

Dr Michael Rivera King
Director of Ashinaga UK

Name: Idriss

Nationality: Burundi

Country of Study: UK

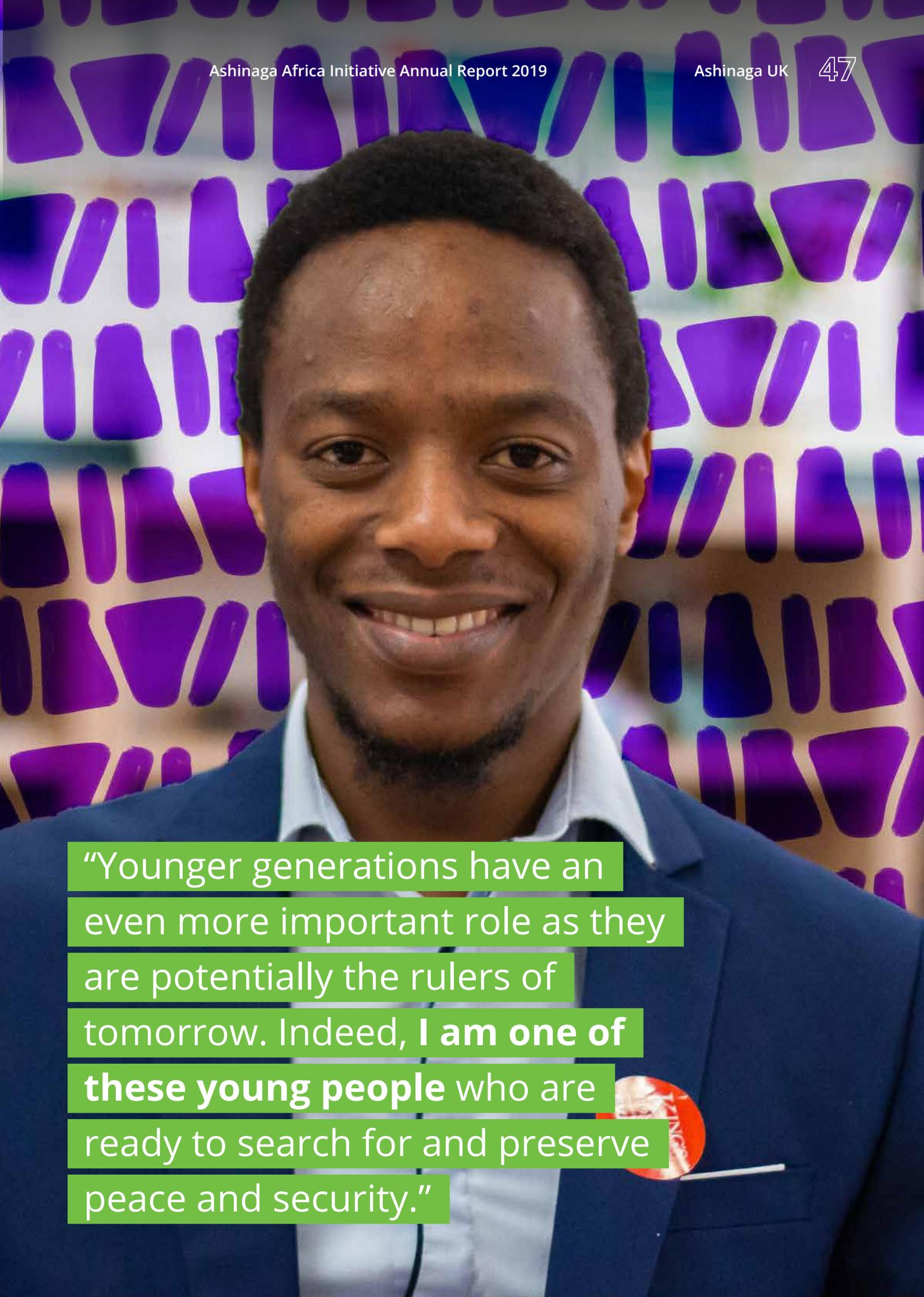
Field of Study: International Relations and Development

My name is Idriss, and I am Burundian. I am currently an AAI Scholar at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) based in London, United Kingdom.

I have a keen passion for peace, security, and stability. These motivations were stimulated by my experience living during a wartime period in my country, and the underlying conflicts and political tensions that have never ceased to erupt in the many African states. There is a need to limit suffering. Prosperity in Burundi, Africa, or the world will only be sustained by the absence of war and conflict, and valorization of peace and security mechanisms. The search for these concepts is the duty of everyone. Younger generations have an even a more important role as they are potentially the rulers of tomorrow. Indeed, I am one of these young people who are ready to search for and preserve peace and security.

Throughout the Ashinaga Africa Initiative, I developed the required skills that will help me achieve my dream of reaching sustainable peace in my country. Through different sessions organized during the AAI and individual mentorship, I have been able to catalyze my leadership skills. My public speaking skills and networking abilities improved. Predominant topics such as pan-Africanism and climate change were discussed, and new ideas produced. Finally, skills in project writing have been accumulated.

Undeniably, the time I spent with the AAI has been one of great significance in my personal development, my career path, and my community development.



“Younger generations have an even more important role as they are potentially the rulers of tomorrow. Indeed, **I am one of these young people** who are ready to search for and preserve peace and security.”

Brazil

2019 was a year of structural milestones for Ashinaga's first office in Latin America. Shortly after opening the doors to our regional headquarters in São Paulo in February, we formed partnerships with key organizations focusing on Japan-Brazil and South-South cooperation. Chief among these partners was Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through which we secured tuition-free places at prestigious universities for Ashinaga's Portuguese-speaking Scholars.

As we seek to deepen cultural ties between Brazil and Japan, we were also excited to announce our partnership with Japan House, a cultural organization managed by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Between 1981-2006, about 750 Japanese students took part in a cultural exchange program – overseen by Ashinaga Vice President Osamu Fujimura – through which they experienced life and study in Brazil. We look forward to re-launching this program in 2020 in partnership with Japan House, albeit with smaller numbers.

Brazil is home to approximately 1.5 million Japanese descendants, the largest population outside Japan. Conversely, Brazilians represent the fifth largest foreign community in Japan, most of whom reside in Aichi prefecture. Relating to AAI, Brazilian universities are the natural destination of choice for students from the six Portuguese-speaking countries in Africa, whose combined populations total approximately 60 million. These factors dovetail with recent trends in international development, placing a greater emphasis on South-South Triangular Cooperation. In this context, Ashinaga Brazil is ideally situated to both further the objectives of the AAI and, at the same time, promote greater cultural links between Japan and Brazil.

Aside from these institutional successes, our 11 Scholars continue to perform well in subjects as diverse as Mechanical Engineering, Economics, Business Administration, and Biological Science. In the latter half of 2019, two Scholars were accepted to the prestigious University of São Paulo, one of the top institutions in the Portuguese-speaking world. In December 2019, our very first Scholar, Emercio (Cohort One, Mozambique) set yet another milestone for Ashinaga Brazil as the first AAI Scholar to graduate in Brazil. We look forward to following his progress as he deepens his expertise at graduate school next year.

Andrew Castro
Director of Ashinaga Brazil

Name: Nelica

Nationality: Guinean

Country of Study: Brazil

Field of Study: Computer Engineering

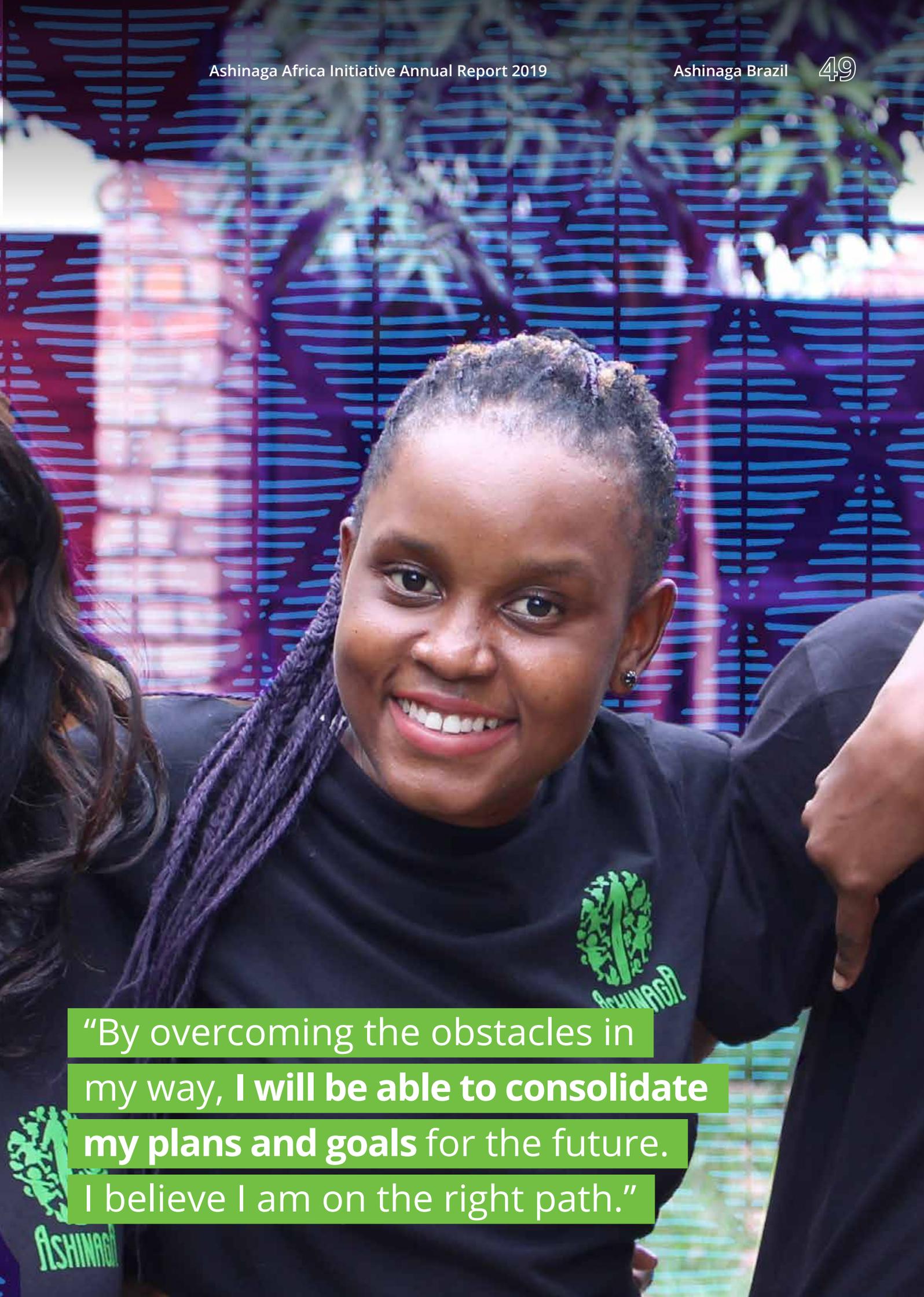
I always wanted to become a lawyer while growing up, because in my country we often think that you can be only successful when you work for politicians. During high school I had the opportunity to enroll in a technical ICT course. That is when I discovered my passion for technology.

Guinea Bissau ranks very low when it comes to the Human Development Index (HDI). I believe that the lack of technology development is one of the causes. Studying in Brazil is a great opportunity to gain the knowledge and skills to work toward my country's development.

My main project is to create computer programs to help store and protect people's personal data. In my country, most documents are still handwritten, so there are security problems related to counterfeit documents and information leaks related to documents storing practices. Having a digital database would make access to information easier and make public services more efficient.

Another project I have in mind is to build a platform to give access to information about corruption in Guinea-Bissau. By doing so, I would like to give people the chance to educate themselves about the negative impact of corruption on their lives and fight against it with data. An organized population can come together to be critical about politics. Furthermore, this platform would include information about history, culture, and Guinean traditions. At the moment, these resources are hard to find on the internet so my project would help people learn more about Guinea-Bissau.

The Study Camp in Ashinaga Uganda was just the start. At the camp I could broaden my vision while living with students of different countries and cultures at the Kokoro-Juku. I improved my leadership qualities and teamwork skills. The classes made me see the world around me from another point of view. By overcoming the obstacles in my way, I will be able to consolidate my plans and goals for the future. I believe I am on the right path.



“By overcoming the obstacles in my way, I will be able to consolidate my plans and goals for the future. I believe I am on the right path.”





ASHINAGA

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