

I am writing this report for Kenyan people to tell what I, as Japanese, felt thorough my stay in Kenya. I have read reports written in the past few years and found that there were lots of common thoughts and the way of thinking between me and other volunteer students in Japan. That is why I decided to write it in English so that it is not going to be just a repeat of the past reports.

I will write down what I felt during my stay in order.

On the first day of the village stay, I went to see people making a road. I was surprised that people even women were so strong to dig and work. I tried to imitate what they do and found it was a very hard work. Since I have heard that they did it as volunteers, I felt their strong desire to get a better life. Among this experience, there is one thing that I found. Many of them had children. That means they have someone to take care of. I think the fact makes people have strong spirit and heart.

Women working to make a road



On the other hand, I met a lot of alcoholic young people in a city or on the road. They seemed to have nothing to do except for seducing women or drinking alcohol. One serious problem that I felt here and also Mr. Kita told us was there are few jobs in Kenya. I heard from Mr Kita that young people who have no job have a lot of energy and time, so they tend to use their energy to do something bad. I am studying development studies in the University of Manchester and studying education in my home university, so I wanted to connect development and education, but I found what they want the most was “job.”

I am sad to say that most of people in Kenya do not care about throwing away their

rubbish on the road. For instance, one day, my host mother gave me a candy. After eating it, I was thinking where I should put the wrap in. Having seen me, she collected the wrap and threw it on the road. In Japan, there are a lot of litters almost every 100 meters and people want to keep the road clean. I thought these habitats of Kenyan people can cause jiggers, which is a disease, happening in an insanitary area.

At a slum called Kamukunji: the roads are filled with garbage



A leg of a man suffering from Jiggers

Everywhere, people were always staring at me and sometimes they touch me or call me “white people” that made me feel like I am an outsider.

They think I am a rich person, so they begged money or sweets. I could have given them some money or foods but it is not sustainable, so I do not prefer this idea.

On the fourth day of my village stay, I spent time with children of Gladys, who is a chief of one association, and I was impressed by them. I found even young children are so

independent and good at taking care of others. For example, when I eat supper, children brought a chair and jumper and tea for me though I did not ask them to do so. Also they are willing to do the household chores without their mother's urge. In Japan, mothers tend to take care of their children too much. This leads children to depend on their parents until they are quite old. We should follow Kenyan children.

In my host family's house: Children are cleaning the floor for neighbors



In the afternoon, lots of people were just talking each other or even sitting down on the road. I found they were tired of working and were lack of energy. It is important to eat something to be motivated.

As well as food, money can be a strong trigger of their motivation.

The most important aspect to conduct a group is not to be a specialist but to get a trust in what they do. However a man is clever, he cannot be a leader without a good leadership.

Throughout the village stay, I changed my mind in many ways. At first, I was thinking about how Kenya should develop or urbanize but I thought the important thing is "happiness." Though Japan is called developed country, there are a lot of people who do not enjoy their life. Some of them even suicide. I, as Japanese, ask for efficiency and usefulness but at the same time, I lost some precious things we can find out when we are not in a hurry like the interaction between neighborhoods. There are still things that we sometimes forget and there is a lot of happiness in the village. I found my arrogant attitude before and I started to respect them. I am ashamed that I could just give them things because they gave me more than things.

After leaving from Eldred, we went to Nairobi. We stayed a children's house for two

days. Ms. Kikumoto, a Japanese woman, is a chief of the facility. She provides not only place to live for children but also place to work for women who has children to take care.

Stuffed animal for sale



Mothers making animal stuffs

I strongly remember a meeting held at night. We were discussing about what they felt so far.

Ms Kikumoto said there are sometimes differences between Kenyan and Japanese in terms of their needs. In other words, what we really need is sometimes what is not important.

She also mentioned that what we have seen is just one part of Kenya. There are varieties of aspects in Kenya. Kenya is more diversity country than we think.

In addition, she criticized the contemporary politics in Kenya. Only people at the top own quite a lot of money and the others cannot get enough money for their hard work.

At last, she mentioned that we should have a big dream to achieve. She said it is all

right to be too big. Then try to find a way to the point. You can find various ways. After the meeting I am thinking about my dream for a long time until now and I thought I want to shrink gap between rich and poor. I know as long as in capitalism world, the gap never disappears, but I believe it is possible to reduce. I still have not found a way on my own and looking for it.

Finally, I will end my report by saying that I really appreciate everyone who is related to this study tour. I had a precious time and I will never forget about my experience and what I thought in Kenya. I hope I can hear from anybody who read this report because I also would like to know what the readers think about this report. Please feel free to contact here: rsd10273@nifty.com

Thank you.

A visit to private primary school: teaching what is Japan like



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