

CAPACITY BUILDING OPPORTUNITIES IN JAPAN FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS FROM SRI LANKA

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Characteristics of Japanese HEIs and Research Institutions

- 770 universities (national, public and private) and several tens of national research institutes of global excellence...SSP is a gateway to engaging with these institutions
- Research seminars at their pedagogic core that nurture a community of scholars from undergrad through to post-doctoral research, nurturing lifelong friendships and inspirational collaboration
- Stubborn refusal to see higher education and research as a market-driven phenomenon but as a place for nurturing the next generation of leaders
- Excellent facilities and equipment for research, regularly renewed, even in locations outside the large metropolitan areas

Message to prospective scholars from Sri Lanka

- Ask if you do not know!...Japanese is a difficult language, but if asked, Japanese people are among the most helpful in the world....that said, however, if you can, learn the language, do so!...it is the access key to millennia of accumulated knowledge in this country!
- Commit yourself to excellence in your engagements in your host institution but keep an eye on the big picture of what is happening outside, both in Japan and overseas.
- Contextualize your work against Japan's commitment to Industry 4.0 (the AI/IOT & DX revolution), its own policy articulation of Society 5.0 and recent government-industry-academia partnerships in fostering STI for realizing the SDGs
- (1) Countering infectious diseases, (2) regenerative (rather than exploitative) business that builds back better, (3) regional revitalization harmonizing the environment and our economies, and (4) empowering people and strengthening bonds among them are the current thrust of Japan's STI for SDGs programme.

Relationship with Sri Lanka's needs

- STI is absolutely essential to take Sri Lanka from ca. \$4000 to \$10,000 pc GDP by the end of this decade.
- While science is neutral, technology can have bias which could take us towards goodness or trouble, so it must be deployed with a higher sense of purpose for the greater good, and Japan is receptive to this...the recent inclusion of humanities and social sciences in the Sakura Science Program is indicative of this.
- Sri Lanka has a large expatriate science community, and one that is growing in Japan, so, in partnership with Japan, it would be good to establish a “place of excellence” in Sri Lanka where this expatriate community can engage with Sri Lankan counterparts.
- Japan has done this successfully in Thailand, Egypt, Malaysia, India and Vietnam and, perhaps strengthening research exchange linkages among young scholars through the Sakura Science program will lay the foundations for such an initiative in Sri Lanka.
- The transnational network of Sakura Science Clubs, facilitated and funded by Japan, is a platform that will forge lasting friendships among young people driven by intellectual curiosity to explore....they will be the stewards of our future....this can surely be one of the best pathways to uplift the human spirit, care for the earth's environment and realize peace and prosperity for all.

**Wishing the Sakura Science Club Alumni
Network all the very best!**

Thank you