

Africa NOW #123

Issued in July 2023, by Africa Japan Forum (AJF)

«Contents»

pp. 2-21 **Special Topic: Realizing “health for all” through global health advocacy**

Africa Japan Forum (AJF) established the Study Group on Infectious Diseases in 2000. During this time, when there was an explosive spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa, AJF was one of the first Japanese civil society organizations to respond to the voices of people living with HIV, who demanded access to antiretroviral drugs against HIV. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic which started in 2020, AJF has been networking and collaborating with civil society in Japan and around the world to demand for equitable access to vaccines and medicines. Currently, AJF’s global health efforts call for inclusivity of all people, in solidarity with the LGBTIQ+ movement, as well as in response to global challenges such as the climate and food crises. Building on these movements, this issue of “Africa NOW” includes a special feature titled “Realizing ‘health for all’ through global health advocacy.”

pp. 3-4 **A 20-year history of AJF’s global health efforts - Beyond HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 to the next pandemic by Inaba Masaki**

Inaba Masaki, AJF’s Co-Chair and Director of Global Health, looks back on AJF’s global health activities over the last 20 years. Since 2000, AJF has conducted regular seminars on HIV/AIDS-related issues in Africa, translated materials into Japanese, participated in conferences which were held abroad, conducted field research, and invited people living with HIV from Africa to Japan. AJF has also networked with international civil society actors through its involvement with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund), which was established in 2002. Currently, AJF is also working on improving national and global policies around Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (PPPR), in response to the effects of, and lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

p. 5 **Table: AJF’s history of global health initiatives (2000-present)**

pp. 6-17 **Youth changemakers: Interviews at the GFAN meeting by Taimu Fujita**

* pp. 6-11: Japanese translations / pp. 12-17: English original

The Global Fund Advocates Network (GFAN) is a global network of advocates and activists that support and build movements for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund). In April, the Global Health team of Africa Japan Forum (AJF) participated in a network meeting where global activists gathered in Nairobi, Kenya. Speakers from various countries in Africa who have seen and experienced the Global Fund’s impacts on people’s lives were invited to the meeting. Some of the youth advocates have shared their stories with us.

Interview with Emmanuela Dwatuka Ngoni

“If I don’t advocate for the transformation of the system, I’ll also be impacted the same way my peers have been impacted.”

Emmanuela Dwatuka Ngoni is a youth advocate from South Sudan who works with AfriYAN (African Youth and Adolescents Network) South Sudan, a network that advocates for young people’s Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR). She shared the challenges of working within her community, and advocating for policies on sexual health that meet young people’s needs. According to Emmanuela, as community members accept the fact that young people have sex, the topic of youths’ sexual health can shift away from restrictive and shameful conversations to one that is more focused on health and well-being. She also shared her hopes for South Sudanese youth, who, despite their negative image, have innovative ideas to share with the rest of the world.

Interview with Priscilla Abu

“It’s all part of your story. Let people know that you are an important person”

Priscilla Abu is the president of the Young Health Advocates Ghana, a network that educates young people living with HIV and includes them in decision-making processes pertaining to their health. Through her network, she has worked on issues often faced by young people living with HIV and the LGBTIQ+ community, particularly stigma and discrimination. She has also offered care for young people who have experienced gender-based violence and abuse. Priscilla shared a message of encouragement to other youths, namely, to find a right mentor or organization to work for, and to be confident in your own strengths.

Interview with Eudora Ogechukwu Nwangwu

“We are more than our sexuality, there are so many things we can contribute to society. Love is not a crime.”

Eudora Ogechukwu Nwangwu (they/them) is an intersex, gender equality and sexual rights activist from Nigeria. Eudora talked about issues surrounding gender and sexuality in Nigeria, including the criminalization of homosexuality, harassment and attacks on LGBTQI+ persons, the inability as a queer person to disclose one’s identity to family members, and the inability for them to escape society. At the same time, Eudora shared their strengths - that if they can survive such situations, they can help others overcome discrimination. Eudora passionately shared that queer people are more than just their sexuality; that there are so many ways in which the queer community can contribute to society.

pp. 18-19 **Global Civil Society and the G7** by Koizumi Takakiyo

Koizumi Takakiyo, AJF’s Global Health Project Coordinator, introduced AJF’s activities from late 2022 as the domestic coordinator of the Civil-7 Global Health Working Group, in preparation for the G7 Summit which was held in Hiroshima, Japan, in May 2023. The Civil-7 Global Health Working Group managed a network of about 250 international health activists from 50 countries, and developed policy recommendations on five themes: 1) Universal Health Coverage (UHC), 2) Gender and Health, 3) Planetary Health, 4) Global Health Architecture, and 5) Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (PPPR).

pp. 20-21 **Initial Response of the Delegation of the Civil-7 Global Health Working Group to the G7 Leaders’ Communique (Section on Global Health) and “G7 Hiroshima Vision for Equitable Access to Medical Countermeasures”**

pp. 22-23 **What I have learned being born and raised in Japan** by Marvelous Fasan

This is the 16th installment of the series, ‘Essay Relay - African Kids Club.’ Born in Tokyo in 2004 to Nigerian parents, Marvelous Fasan attended Japanese schools from kindergarten through high school. In elementary and junior high school, she was avoided by others, simply because her skin color was different from everyone else’s. However, when she went to Nigeria in her third year of junior high school, she was able to gain confidence in her roots and cultural background for the first time. She attended a high school that encouraged the idea of diversity, as many students had diverse cultural backgrounds. She wrote her thesis for her senior high school study on “Identity of youth with international roots.” She states that her experience has taught her to understand her roots, to accept herself for who she is, and to never give up, no matter how hard things can be.

pp. 24-26 **What Véronique Tadjo, writer from Ivory Coast, left behind - Connecting Rwanda and Japan through her literary work** by Murata Haruse

Véronique Tadjo, a writer from Côte d’Ivoire, was in Japan from February 27 to March 9, 2023. Murata Haruse who has studied French literature in sub-Saharan Africa and translated Tadjo’s books into Japanese, reported on Tadjo’s commemorative lecture at the University of Tokyo, an event held in Kyoto called ‘Talk with Véronique Tadjo,’ and her visit to the coastal areas of Fukushima Prefecture. During her stay in Japan, Murata presented her analyses of the ways in which Tadjo’s work “*Shadow of God (Imana)*” was read in Japan. This piece builds on Tadjo’s experiences of traveling Rwanda from 1998 to 1999, after the genocide which took place in 1994. Additionally, Murata referred to Tadjo’s impressions of the coastal areas of Fukushima Prefecture, which were severely damaged by the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant explosion and tsunami in March 2011. Tadjo shared the similarities between the situation in Rwanda and Fukushima; that there are residents who want to return to their homes but cannot, and that some wish to forget but are worried that if they do, the same thing may happen again.

p. 27 **Talk about one’s own book: Kanbayashi Tomohiro, “The world opened up by the Zulu language / Language and society in South Africa** by Kanbayashi Tomohiro

Kanbayashi Tomohiro talks about his book, “*The world opened up by the Zulu language / Language and society in South Africa (Zu-ru go ga hiraku sekai / Minamiasurika no kotoba to syakai in Japanese)*”. In this book, Kanbayashi introduces the Zulu language through his own experiences of learning and trying to speak Zulu in his daily life. In the section where Kanbayashi shares his experiences learning Zulu in Zulu schools, he traces the history of the Zulu language to show the faint hopes of the Zulu people that are expressed in the Zulu language.

Back cover **Afterword (‘Hitotsu no musubime to shite’ in Japanese) and a record of AJF’s activities**