



Moussa Garba Say ZOULKANEL

Nationality: Benin
Current employer: Toa Corporation
Graduated university: Tokyo Institute of Technology (Tokyo)

What was your initial motivation to come to Japan?

My initial motivation was to study in the world's most advanced country in civil engineering and architecture. Besides, studying in Japan could be a great chance to learn new language and culture, not to forget that I was a big fan of karate, samurai and ninja Hollywood movies. So I was quite excited to be able to discover them in real life.

What were your reasons for staying and working in Japan?

I decided to stay and work here because I think I have more opportunities to learn new culture and achieve good working experience here compared to my home country. In addition, I wanted to experience working using my Japanese language skill. Also, Japanese people are very kind to foreign residents.

What were the positive and negative aspects of your academic experience?

Japanese universities have very efficient material and equipment for research and studies. However the pedagogic skills are still poor.

How did your academic experience affect your decision to stay in Japan?

After studying here for 4 years I thought it was a good idea to try myself in field as practicing engineer, so I decided to stay for some time.

What aspects of the academic environment helped you in acquiring a job?

Just needed some Japanese language ability, and the recommendation from your supervisor or professor in charge of job-hunting matters.

What sort of work are you doing at your current job?

I now work for a civil engineering general contractor for marine construction. For domestic works, I only use Japanese. But, when in the international division, English is more appropriate for all members.

How would you describe your interaction and relationship with your coworkers?

So far, so good, but there are still a few things to learn in Japanese culture.

Have you experienced any issues or problems thus far in your work environment?

Sometimes it's hard to understand the talks with your coworkers, due to cultural and linguistic barriers. Japanese easily trust themselves, but not so easily trust a foreigner.

Based on your experience, what sort of support is necessary from universities or other organizations to help foreign students who want to stay and work in Japan?

Provide important information available for access online, and translate them into the appropriate language. Open a board of guidance and support for those who are interested in job hunting.

What should foreign students do if they are interested in staying and working in Japan?

Make their study plan very clear and more specific. Look for scholarship opportunities with private entities. Contact with other foreign residents who had or are still enrolled in the targeted university.