



Comms Intern Report 2023

International Monetary Fund Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific



2023 Comms Intern

木村まり (ソフィア)

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University of St Andrews, BA
(4th year)



Recruitment Schedule in 2023

3/27	4/4	4/19	4/29	5/30	11/29
Application Submission	Written Examination	Interview	Offer	Internship Start	Internship End

Q1. What is your major and what was your motivation for the application?

I am currently a four year at the University of St Andrews in Scotland pursuing a joint degree in International Relations (IR) and Geography. Raised in Washington D.C. in a multicultural household- my mother in Japanese and my father is Spanish and Puerto Rican- I have always been curious about the world. I am particularly passionate about international development, having covered it throughout other internships alongside my coursework from both an IR and Geography lens, and wanted to learn about it more extensively from a financial lens and from the perspective of an international organisation. I also wanted to further explore my intersecting interests in foreign affairs, international development, media, and public relations.

Q2. What did the application process entail?

There were several stages in the application process. First, I submitted my CV alongside a cover letter in both Japanese and English. I was also asked to provide two letters of recommendation. I was then invited to take a two-hour written examination for further evaluation. In the evaluation, I was asked to translate a Tweet into Japanese, draft a Facebook post in English, and propose a social media campaign for the upcoming 30th anniversary of the Japan-IMF Scholarship Program for Asia (JISPA), an OAP-administered scholarship programme. I was finally invited for a 30-minute online panel interview, where I was asked about my communications experiences, expectations for the internship, and future goals.

Q3. What were your main tasks in the internship?

Throughout my internship, I primarily created and posted social media content to promote JISPA and its 30th anniversary celebrations. I focused on creating interview highlight videos of five JISPA alumni, as well as 'quote cards' with each of their unique central messages. Aside from video production, I also contributed to the building of the special anniversary website, logo, and novelty goods. Outside of JISPA promotion, I supported preparations for Global Festa, developed interactive content, tracked social media insights, proofread key documents including the OAP newsletter, and assisted with event set-up.

Examples of content developed during the internship

The collage features several testimonials and a central logo. The testimonials include:

- 01** JISPA paved the way to become an economist from a civil engineer. A decade later, I gained an opportunity to network with fellow alumni and retreat my knowledge. *Mr Rasheed Rahman Bander*, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2002-2007.
- 02** After having my third child, I decided to apply for JISPA. It is a lot of work to maintain family life and studies, but Japan is very comfortable and easy to adapt. *Zelazya Ekhar*, Universiti of Malaya, 2002-2008.
- 03** I am absolutely honored to be a part of this esteemed scholarship program. It is a significant opportunity for me, given my family's limited exposure to education, to pursue a PhD in Japan. *Andi Setiawan*, Institut Teknologi Sepuluh Nopember, 2002-2008.
- 04** JISPA is very well designed with a good combination of lectures, workshops and case studies. We can gain knowledge, share experiences and build networks. *Songho Yalder*, Central West of Scotland University, 2012-2014.
- 05** JISPA opened a door of opportunity for me to work better in my country. My analytical thinking and my logical thinking have become wider and deeper. *Yusuf Fauzan*, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2007-2009.
- 06** My biggest gain from JISPA was independence. JISPA is the perfect environment for women to experience life, learn resilience, and gain confidence in a new country. *Prasanna Kulkarni*, National Institute of Public Health, 2011-2013.
- 07** My life in Niigata - the educational atmosphere, facilities, and social life - were all amazing. I also loved experiencing four seasons for the first time in my life. *Wahyuni Hidayat*, International University of Japan, 2002-2010.
- 08** I owe it to JISPA and the University of Tokyo for exposure to multiple cultures, to other foreign scholars and Japanese students. It really enriched my experience. *Reynaldo Behayo Delos Santos Jr.*, National Institute of Government Administration, Philippines, University of Malaya, 2007-2013.

The central logo reads "jiswa 30 YEARS FOR ASIA'S FUTURE".

A video thumbnail shows a woman speaking with the text: "It's like the key that opened a door of opportunity for me".

JISPA Voices 2023 (5)
Listen to the testimonials of five alumni of the Japan-IMF Scholarship Program for Asia (#JISPA) who recently returned to Tokyo to join a refresher course a decade after completing their graduate studies in economics in Japan! The testimonials are released every Friday evening Japan time.
Latdavanh Songvilay of @Lao Academy of Social and Economic Sciences, one of over 880 JISPA alumni, graduated from National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in 2009... See more

Q4. What was most memorable from the internship?

I was very fortunate to have completed my internship in-person after the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. I worked from the OAP office almost every day, which gave me the opportunity to get to know most of my colleagues. I have fond memories of speaking and laughing with colleagues over lunch, and especially at our annual retreat in July. At both the morning discussion session and the afternoon barbecue, I enjoyed getting to know colleagues who I did not necessarily have the chance to work closely with. I also particularly enjoyed visiting the Ministry of Finance and the Bank of Japan as part of the JISPA graduation activities. I learned about the functions of each of these institutions, as well as fun facts which I had not known prior to visiting. During these visits, I also had the opportunity to speak to the JISPA scholars and learn more about their stories, interests, and experiences.

Q5. What did you learn from the internship experience?

Through this internship, I learned more about what a career in communications entails. I learned about the various tasks involved, from writing newsletters to creating social media content to supporting event promotion and coordination. The internship also reaffirmed the importance of clear and concise communication, in both written and oral forms. When developing communications products, it is critical to think about the position of the audience and consider what content and format would most appeal to them and convey the desired message. It is therefore essential to make each post brief, clear, and eye-catching. Throughout this internship, I also learned about using video editing tools to produce content. The internship further emphasized the importance of being creative, open-minded, and willing to experiment with new things. I proposed creating and posting more videos on our social media, which was a new, yet successful effort to encourage higher engagement levels. Ultimately, this internship allowed me to further strengthen my communications skills as well as hone more general professional skills.

Q6. Message to future applicants

This internship is an amazing opportunity for anyone who wants to pursue a career in communications in an international organisation, as it gives you a feel for what it is like to work in the field. Through this experience, you can strengthen your existing skills while picking up new ones along the way. In addition, OAP is a great working environment. Everyone in the office is warm and welcoming. I also felt that my input was truly valued, as I would be asked for comments and feedback, and they would be reflected in the products. This requires that you have the confidence, capability, and strong mentality to consistently take initiative and adopt many responsibilities. You must be able to collaborate effectively with others, while also managing to work on your own. I would highly recommend this internship to anyone who would like to learn about communications and the workings of a prominent international organisation in a supportive, encouraging environment.

