


ASHINAGA

Ashinaga Africa Initiative

Program Overview



Ashinaga is a Japanese Foundation headquartered in Tokyo. We provide financial support and emotional care to young people around the world who have lost either one or both parents. With a history of more than 55 years, our support has enabled more than 110,000 orphaned students to gain access to higher education.

From 2001, we expanded our activities internationally, with our first office abroad in Uganda. Since then, we have established new offices in Senegal, the US, Brazil, the UK, and France to support the Ashinaga Africa Initiative.

Our Mission

Ashinaga provides education and support to students who have lost either one or both parents worldwide. This empowers them to overcome challenges and advance their education, develop leadership skills, and to become agents of social change.

Our Vision

We believe in the eradication of poverty through equitable education and professional training for all young people who have lost their parents.

Our Ethos

A warm heart, an open mind, a proactive attitude, and an international outlook.

About the Ashinaga Africa Initiative

The Ashinaga Africa Initiative (AAI) is an academic leadership program launched in 2014. It aims to contribute to sub-Saharan Africa's expanding role in global development through increasing access to international higher education. AAI Scholars are students who have lost one or both parents and are committed to returning home, or to the region of sub-Saharan Africa, to initiate change, innovation, and development.

Ashinaga provides each selected AAI Scholar with the academic and financial support to study abroad, as well as access to mentoring and career guidance. After graduation, Scholars return home, empowered to turn their vision into reality. Each year, Ashinaga aims to select one AAI Scholar from each country in sub-Saharan Africa.

Key Elements of the AAI



Commitment

Most importantly, all AAI Scholars are committed to pay forward the support they have received. They do this by becoming the catalysts of change on the ground in sub-Saharan Africa.



Selection

Identifying and selecting the right candidate is key to the success of the program. For this reason, we have developed a rigorous recruitment process in cooperation with embassies, partner NGOs, and local education experts from each country to ensure we choose the right candidates.



Support

We provide support every step of the way, with full-time staff available to provide guidance and professional training. Throughout their university degree, Scholars are provided with academic and logistical support to ensure they are on track for their personal goals and ambitions.



Proposal & Internships

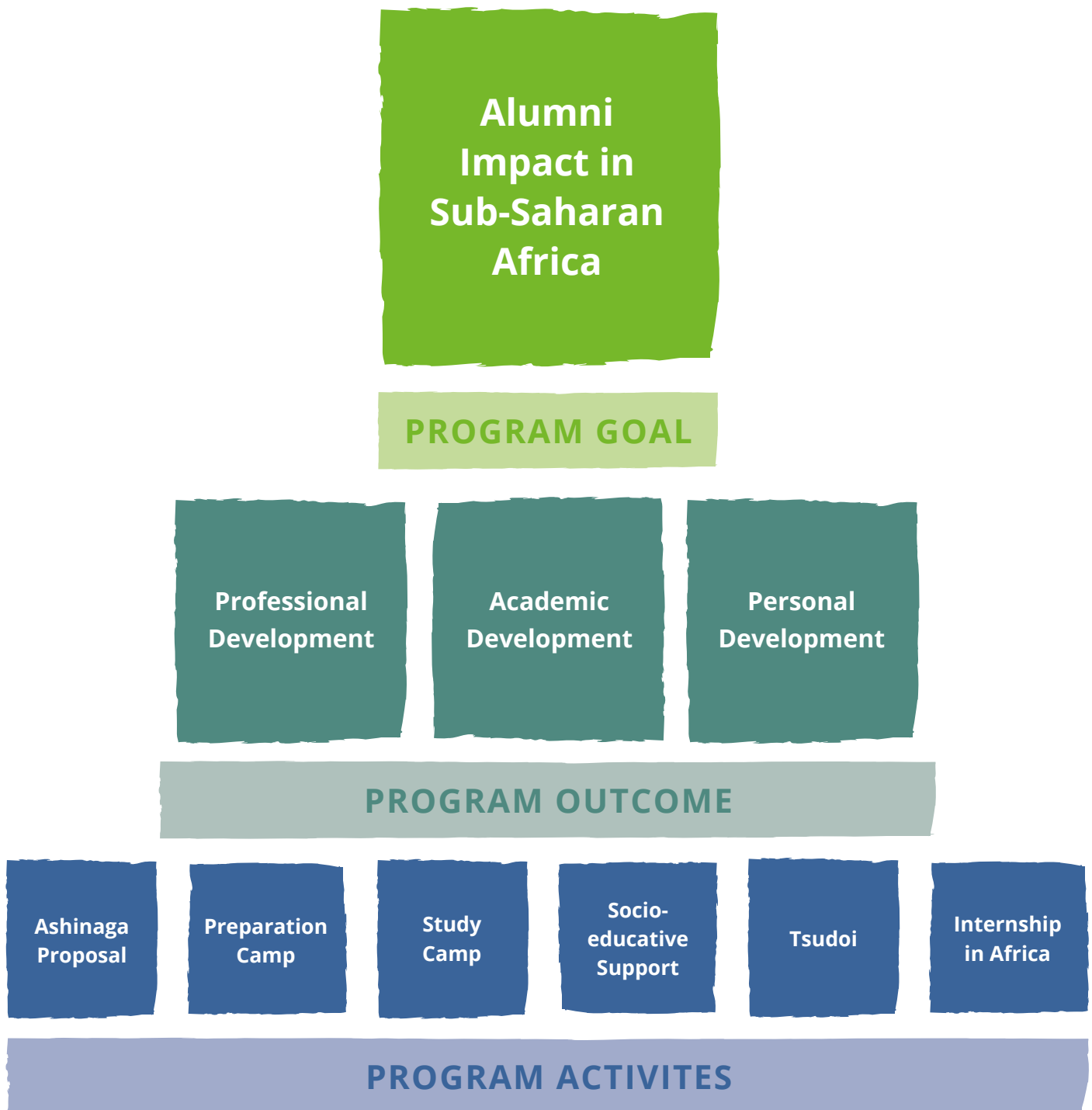
During their undergraduate degree, AAI Scholars conduct research and put together budgeted proposals to tackle a social issue faced in their local communities. Whilst developing this project, Scholars also complete at least one internship on the African continent.



Network

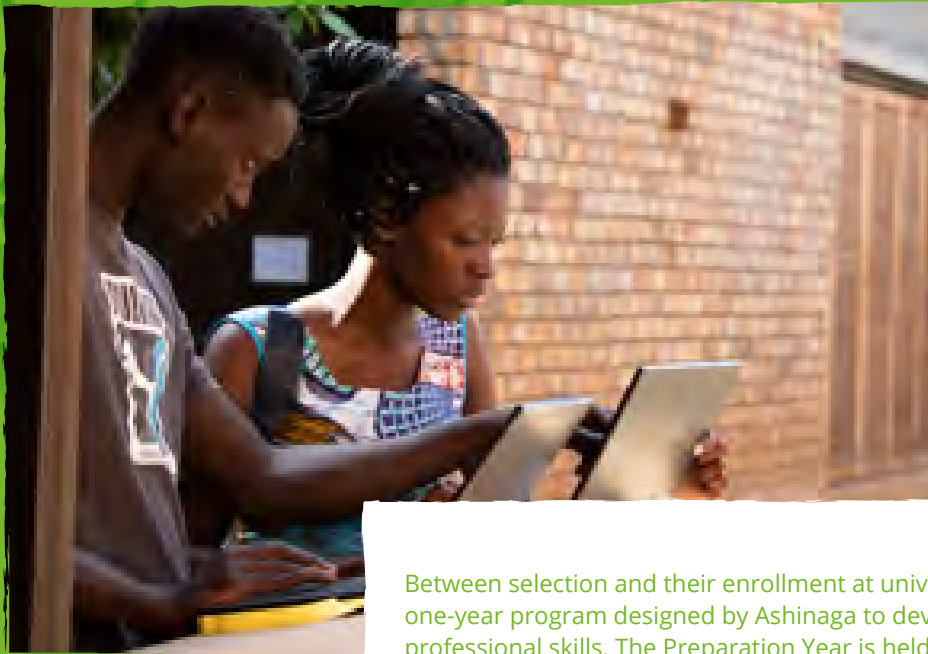
AAI Scholars are connected to a global network of mentors, alumni, partner organizations, our *Kenjin-Tatsujin* International Advisory Council, past interns, and fellow Scholars.

Program Structure



Leadership Framework

Through our program activities the AAI encourages the Professional, Academic and Personal Development of all Scholars, putting them in a position to achieve the program's mission. These goals are explained through the Leadership Development Framework in the above diagram.



Preparation Year

Between selection and their enrollment at university, all selected applicants join a one-year program designed by Ashinaga to develop academic, personal, and professional skills. The Preparation Year is held in Uganda or Senegal, depending on the language of study, and is comprised of a Study Camp and Preparation Camp.

The Study Camp is six-months of intensive academic courses and leadership development. AAI Candidates* attending the camp are provided with subject-specific coursework, experience-based leadership training, and tailored academic and career orientation.

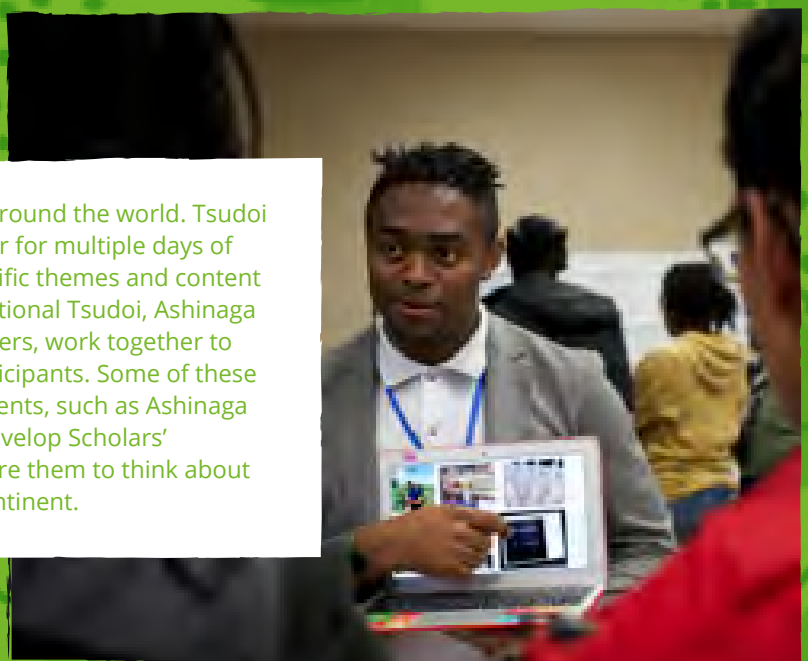
Prior to starting university, Candidates return to either Uganda or Senegal to conduct a two-month Preparation Camp, prepare for their new lives abroad. The Preparation Camp provides additional teaching, as well as support and guidance on the adjustment of moving to a new environment.

Our Camps provide invaluable experience for the Scholars. Candidates from across sub-Saharan Africa live and study together in a diverse and vibrant environment, which allows them to make long-lasting connections and strengthen their Pan-African identities.

**AAI Candidate: a selected AAI applicant, while enrolled in the Preparation Year Program*

International Tsudoï

Throughout the year, multiple tsudoï take place around the world. Tsudoï are an opportunity for Scholars to gather together for multiple days of activities. Although the goals are similar, the specific themes and content are customized to each regional office. At International Tsudoï, Ashinaga staff and Scholars, along with special guest speakers, work together to create workshops, lectures, and activities for participants. Some of these activities relate directly to the Ashinaga requirements, such as Ashinaga Proposal presentations. Other activities aim to develop Scholars' professional, academic, and social skills and inspire them to think about both their future and the future of the African continent.





Student Support

The Student Relations Team (SRT) is the student's main point of contact within Ashinaga and is responsible for supporting their personal, professional, and academic development from the moment that they arrive in their country of study to the day they graduate. The SRT assists the Scholars throughout the Ashinaga Leadership Framework, which forms the basis of Ashinaga's leadership training for the duration of a Scholar's university career.

Each Scholar is assigned to a member of the Student Relations Team, who assists them throughout their time abroad. The overall goal of the team is to accompany Scholars in fulfilling the AAI mission: making a positive impact in their field or community in sub-Saharan Africa.

Proposal Example

"The maternal mortality rate is unacceptably high in sub-Saharan African countries including Ethiopia. My Proposal seeks to help resolve this issue. According to USAID, women in Ethiopia have a 1-in-52 chance of dying from childbirth related complications. The major causes are traditional malpractice during pregnancy such as abdominal massage during difficult labour and inadequate awareness about institutional delivery. In order to help tackle this, my Proposal includes the following solutions. Firstly, raising awareness among the community about the importance of antenatal and prenatal care, safe child delivery in health institutions, and consequences of traditional malpractice can be one sensible solution to reduce maternal mortality rate in the country. Secondly, conducting ongoing weekly group discussions and distributing packages with leaflets supported by pictures can create the awareness. Furthermore, training people how to assist a safe childbirth can also be a workable community-based initiative solution."



Eyerusalem - AAI Scholar

Ashinaga Proposal


Through their Ashinaga Proposal, AAI Scholars explore a problem they identify in their community, country, or continent. The Proposal provides a potential solution that could be implemented once Scholars return home after graduation. In this way, Ashinaga encourages Scholars to remain connected to the African continent by reflecting and taking action on issues they are passionate about. The Ashinaga Proposal is also an opportunity for Scholars to improve their research, critical thinking, analysis, and problem-solving skills in a real-world context. Furthermore, Ashinaga strongly encourages Scholars to approach experts from academia and the professional world while developing their Ashinaga Proposal to receive feedback and guidance. In doing so, Scholars expand their professional network both in their country of study and their home town.

Professional Development

One of the pillars of the Ashinaga Africa Initiative is the development of AAI Scholars' professional capacity and networks. By enabling Scholars to access employment opportunities and entrepreneurship ventures, with the guidance of an effective network of mentors, we aim to foster young professionals with the potential to have a positive impact on the ground and achieve their goals.

Starting at the Preparatory Year and continuing throughout university, AAI Scholars undertake a curriculum aimed at boosting their technical and transferable skills. Amongst others, this includes a special module on career orientation to allow Scholars to explore different possible career paths. The Professional Network Development (PND) team also provides expert advice on how to write effective CVs and cover letters, develop interview skills, and be an effective worker; all fundamental components of employability.

As part of the Ashinaga Africa Initiative, all AAI Scholars are required to undertake at least one internship in sub-Saharan Africa during their studies. This experience allows them to gain relevant experience in their sector of interest, strengthen their professional networks and maintain a link with the African continent. Returning to sub-Saharan Africa for work experience also provides an opportunity to rethink the impact Scholars aim to have in their fields and to find new solutions for implementing their Ashinaga Proposal.



“Interning in Africa is the best way to know the challenges we will face and how to overcome them.”

Albert - AAI Scholar

Since our inception in 2014, the AAI program continues to support incoming Scholars from

47 of the 49 sub-Saharan African countries.

Selected candidates go on to study at world class universities across Japan, Europe, the USA, and Brazil.

Francophone

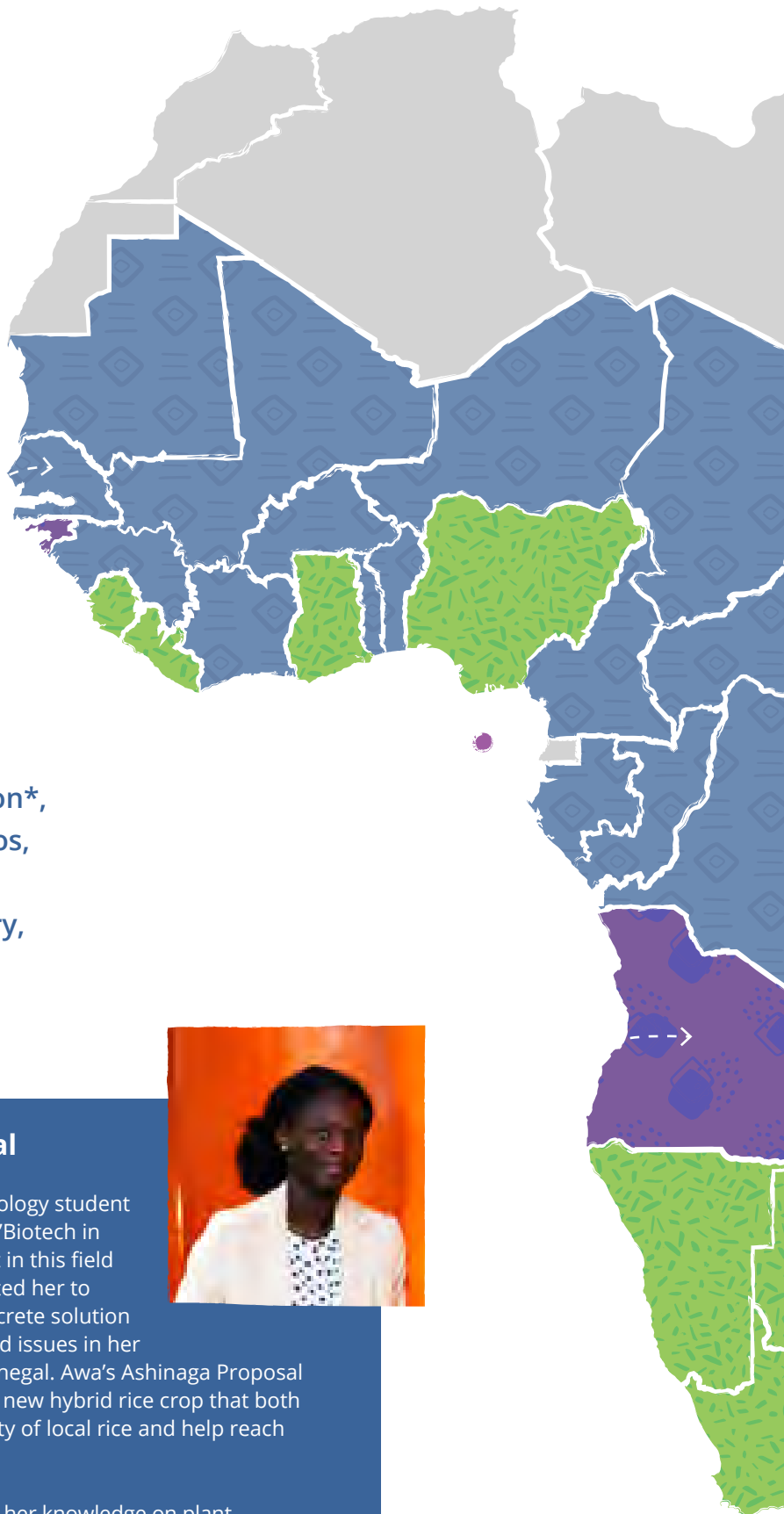
Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon*, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea Conakry, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Republic of Congo, Senegal, and Togo

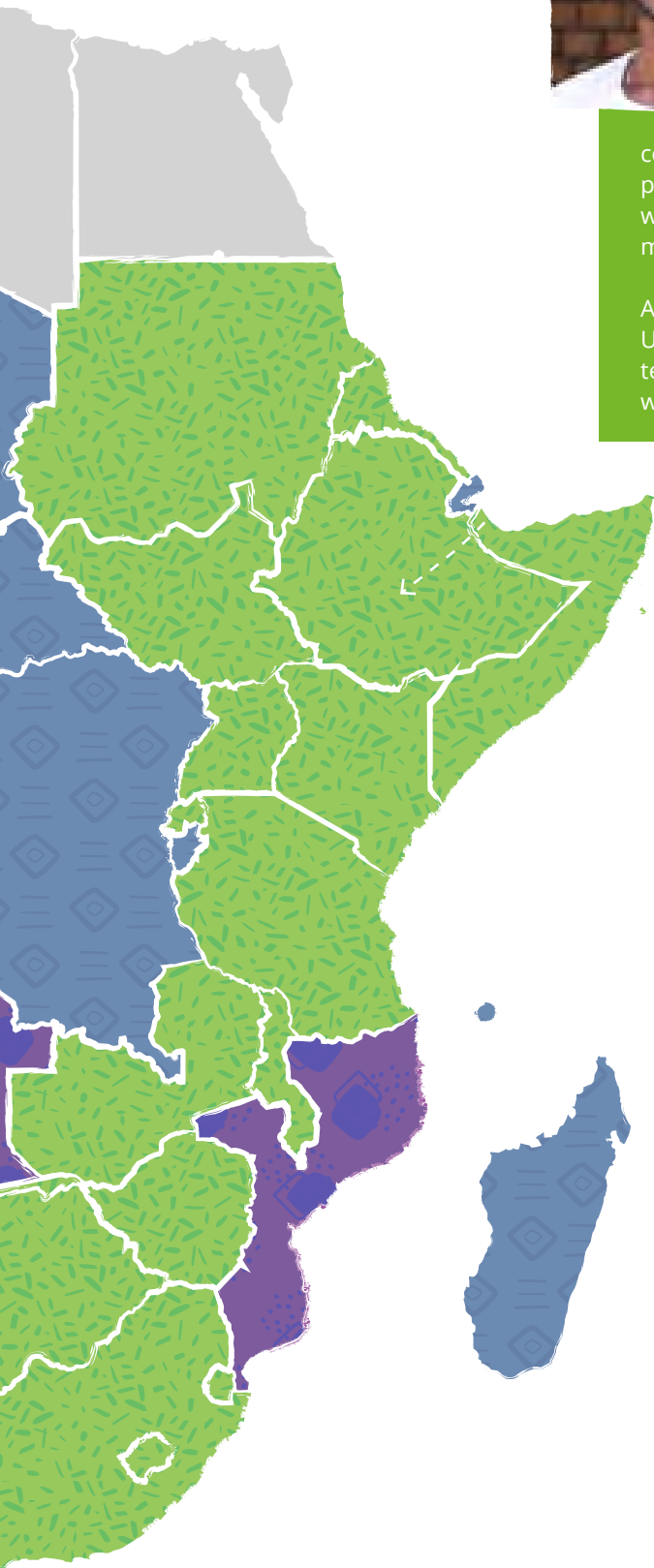
*For countries that have French and English as its official languages, applicants can apply to either the Anglophone or Francophone program. However, this does not guarantee multiple seats on the AAI will be provided.

Awa - Senegal

Awa is a Biotechnology student at the Institut Sup'Biotech in Paris. Her interest in this field of biology motivated her to think about a concrete solution to nutrition-related issues in her home country, Senegal. Awa's Ashinaga Proposal aims to develop a new hybrid rice crop that both improve the quality of local rice and help reach self-sufficiency.

In 2017, to further her knowledge on plant biotechnology, Awa undertook a summer internship in an agricultural research lab in Uganda. The following year she had the opportunity to present her idea at the 3rd Kenjin-Tatsujin Conference in Kyoto, where she received valuable advice and support from the audience.





Biniyam - Ethiopia

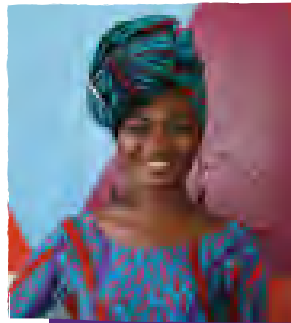
Biniyam is an Electrical Engineering student at Bristol University. Motivated by his passion for STEM subjects, Biniyam aims to use his skills to

contribute to solving the widespread electricity problems in Ethiopia. Growing up in a community which lacked access to adequate sources of energy made him realize how electricity can affected society.

After graduation, Biniyam plans on working in the UK for a few years, before returning to Ethiopia to teach, research and launch a small company which will work to solve electricity problems.

Anglophone

Botswana, Ethiopia, Eritrea, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Kingdom of eSwatini, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritius*, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Seychelles*, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe



Imaculada - Angola

Imaculada is studying Administration at Pontifícia Universidade Católica in São Paulo, Brazil. Combining her interest in marketing, HR, and

finance, she plans to establish her own organization to support children with chronic diseases such as AIDS. Using her own experience of being raised in foster care, Imaculada wants to pass on the kindness she received from a young age. In her community, there are currently not enough institutions to support all the children in need.

In 2019, Imaculada embarked on her first professional internship as a legal secretary. This provided her with an insight into working with high-profile clients, and practical experience in various technical aspects of office administration. She plans to apply for exchange programs in the future to further her knowledge of the industry.

Lusophone

Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe

Journey of a Scholar



Student Selection

Each year, we conduct an extensive selection process in collaboration with local organizations, ministries, and embassies to find academically-excellent, economically-disadvantaged orphaned students from each eligible country in sub-Saharan Africa. With an acceptance rate of 4%, the AAI is a highly competitive program. Together with local education experts, Ashinaga staff members personally visit each country to assess the finalist applicants based on their leadership potential, academic ability and vision to help their home country.



Study Camp

Selected Applicants take part in a one-year preparatory program before enrolling at university. The first part consists of a six-month Study Camp organized by Ashinaga in Senegal or Uganda. This camp focuses on academic preparation, in addition to university application guidance, career planning, and leadership development.



Preparation Camp

After returning home to prepare the necessary official documents, AAI Candidates return to Uganda or Senegal to prepare for the social, cultural, and academic differences that they will encounter during their studies abroad.



University

All AAI Scholars receive ongoing support from their regional office. In addition, they receive funding including tuition, meals, and accommodation in the form of a scholarship. As part of a forgivable loan, Ashinaga provides monthly stipends and additional funding for internships.



Graduation

After graduating from university, AAI Scholars become AAI Graduates and have the chance to gain work experience in their country of study or pursue a higher education before returning to the African continent.



Return to Sub-Saharan Africa

Returning to sub-Saharan Africa is one of the core requirements of the Ashinaga Africa Initiative. Scholars must hold residency in sub-Saharan Africa for at least four of the nine years after graduation. AAI Graduates return to sub-Saharan Africa to begin their journey as young leaders, identify concrete issues, develop adequate solutions, and have a positive impact in their communities.

Our Activities



Kenjin-Tatsujin

The Kenjin-Tatsujin International Advisory Council is a body of influential advisors that forms a key part of the Ashinaga Africa Initiative (AAI). Established in 2014, the council gathers intellectuals and business leaders as well as internationally recognized artists, performers, and athletes.

The Role of the Kenjin-Tatsujin International Advisory Council

- The Kenjin-Tatsujin council provides great intellectual support for the AAI. Together, they provide valuable advice ongoing counsel to Ashinaga's decision making process concerning the project's development.
- Council members assist Ashinaga in developing the institutional trust and authority necessary for fundraising and establishing relationships with universities.
- When possible, Kenjin-Tatsujin members support AAI Scholars directly through professional mentoring and internship opportunities.

Examples of Support from Kenjin-Tatsujin Members

Members of the council have provided internship positions to AAI Scholars across the world. Among others, Dr. Lassina Zerbo, Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, and Dr. Alex Coutinho, have offered internship opportunities in leading institutions and supported the professional development of AAI Scholars.

Some members, including Professor Ebenezer Oduro Owusu, support us regularly in the selection of new Candidates to the Ashinaga Africa Initiative. Others, like Professor Miriam K. Were and Professor Mieko Ikegame, participate in the Preparation Year, giving lectures and inspiring AAI Candidates to realize their potential.



LEGEND

- Dr. Lassina Zerbo: Executive Secretary at Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Burkina Faso
- Dr. Ibrahim Assane Mayaki: Chief Executive Officer of NEPAD, Former Prime Minister of Niger, Niger
- Dr. Alex Coutinho: Former Executive Director of Partners In Health Rwanda, Uganda
- Professor Ebenezer Oduro Owusu: Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana, Ghana
- Professor Miriam K. Were: Former Chancellor of Moi University, Co-Founder of UZIMA Foundation-Africa, Kenya
- Professor Mieko Ikegame: Former Director, United Nation's Office of Under Secretary General and Special Advisor on Africa, Japan



Internship Program

The Ashinaga Internship Program began in 2013, gathering interns from all around the world to participate in an English Teaching program for Ashinaga students in Japan and Uganda. Since then, Ashinaga has continued to expand and develop its movement globally, enabling the Internship Program to grow in turn. To date, Ashinaga has hosted more than 500 interns from over 100 universities worldwide.

Ashinaga interns work in a variety of teams in our offices in Japan, Uganda, and Senegal, to help further the Ashinaga Africa Initiative and arouse AAI Scholars' interest in the world. Whether supporting AAI Scholars during the Preparation Year in our African offices or creating new marketing campaigns in Tokyo, the Ashinaga Internship Program offers interns the opportunity to gain meaningful work experience in an international NGO while building a selection of transferable skills and furthering Ashinaga's mission to provide support for orphaned students all over the world.



University Relations

Ashinaga is committed to enrolling AAI Scholars into prestigious universities around the world. To achieve this goal in a sustainable manner, Ashinaga has created a dedicated team to develop and maintain relations with targeted institutions globally. Every year, renowned universities in Europe, the US, Brazil, and Japan support AAI Scholars by offering various subsidies including tuition fee scholarships, accommodation, and living costs.

The University Relations Team also works closely with the Uganda and Senegal offices to match AAI Candidates to countries and universities that will best allow them to achieve their long-term goals in helping others.

Our Locations

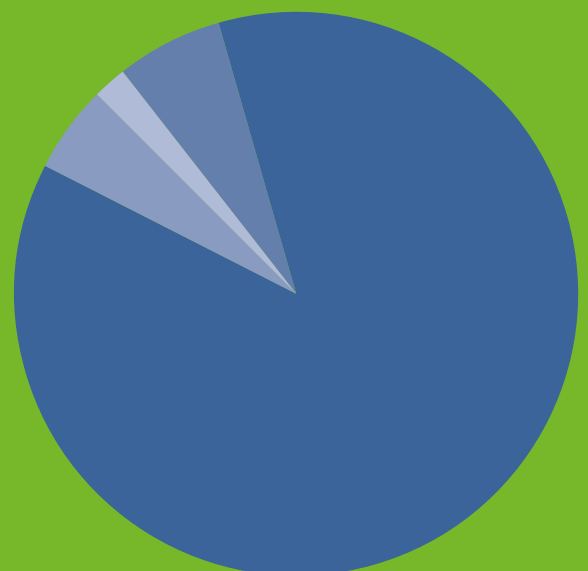
Ashinaga has offices across the globe in order to support AAI Scholars and promote our activities abroad. We currently operate in seven countries in five continents.



How are Ashinaga's activities funded?

87 % of donations come from individuals.

6 % is from Corporate Sponsors, 5 % is from *Bokin**, and 2 % is from other sources of income.



*Bokin: Ashinaga's student-led street fundraising that happens in Japan biannually.

Ashinaga UK

London
Established in 2016

University & Student
Relations

Ashinaga Uganda

Nansana
Established in 2001

Study & Preparation
Camps

Ashinaga Japan

Tokyo

Global Headquarters

University & Student
Relations

FAQs

Why has Ashinaga begun supporting orphaned students outside of Japan?

Following the 1995 Kobe Earthquake and the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, Ashinaga and its students received a substantial amount of donations from abroad. In an effort to pay forward the kindness we received, Ashinaga began raising funds to support orphaned students outside of Japan.

Why does the Ashinaga Africa Initiative focus only on sub-Saharan Africa?

Sub-Saharan Africa has an extremely high number of orphaned students, along with a much lower rate of access to higher education. For these reasons, we decided to concentrate our efforts within this region first.

Why do AAI Scholars study outside of their home country?

We believe that the experience of being exposed to fellow students and teachers from different backgrounds is key to fostering open-minded leaders prepared for a globalized world.

Why is there only one Scholar per country recruited each year?

This is to ensure an equal distribution across sub-Saharan Africa, creating a highly diverse student body who can learn from each other. We hope to increase the number of Scholars per country in the future as resources become available.

How long is the process to become an AAI Scholar?

After being selected, all AAI Candidates attend a one-year preparatory program to develop a variety of skills before enrolling in university. Because of the extensive academic preparation and long university application process, it takes approximately 21 months to become an AAI Scholar from the AAI application deadline.

I am interested in partnering with Ashinaga as an educational institution or employment provider. How can I get involved?

Get in touch with us on our website at en.ashinaga.org/who-we-are/contact/ or via email at info@ashinaga.org for general and donation-related inquiries, and partnerships@ashinaga.org for employers.

