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## Young Leaders Shaping the Future of Global Society!

—Ongoing Expansion of GraSPPers Network

**Toshiro Nishizawa** Professor

I have been visiting various countries for recruitment purposes over the last few years. It is great fun because I am able to catch up with alumni almost everywhere I go, who often provide me with support in uncovering the next generation of public policy students. All of them are actively engaged and flourishing in their positions. It leaves me reassured, heartened and encouraged. Also, current GraSPP students are studying around the world under double degree and exchange programs the school offers. Despite their busy work or study schedules, we get together. All around me are familiar faces with their hopes and aspirations for the future.

I also have the chance to catch up with former students in Hongo. Recently, Jie Li dropped by my office during her business trip. She currently works at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy in Singapore. Alumni based in Japan do the same. Kunro Hino and Yoav Hilman, young professionals actively engaged in international projects on a global scale, came to talk about their personal experiences in my class session. SNSs provide me with a way to feel closer to alumni. Those who only a few years ago were studying in Hongo now provide current GraSPP students with a variety of role models.

The voices I hear from outside my office between classes are roughly an equal mix of Japanese and English. With students from more than 30 countries, GraSPP resembles a microcosm of global society. Many alumni who worked hard and have since gone on to take their place in wider society are taking an active part, not in a microcosm, but in a truly global community as "professionals with intellectual excellence and practical competence" in their respective fields.

Regardless of where they are now, I am confident that GraSPPers, who have moved on from GraSPP now in its eleventh year, are truly "global professionals" in terms of both their abilities and desires. Meanwhile, current GraSPPers endowed with such potential are following in their footsteps. This GraSPPers network is steadily expanding year after year. These links between the young leaders who seek to contribute to the public arena and to shape the future of global society are a great asset for GraSPP.

\* Just as I was finalizing this article, a major earthquake struck Nepal on April 25. My heart goes out to those whose lives have been devastated, and I offer my prayers to the victims. I have been informed that all GraSPP alumni, their family members and those of the current students here in Tokyo are safe. I offer my support to the current students and alumni who will provide aid to those affected and work on recovery and reconstruction.



# Messages from Alumni

## **Ardhi Santoso Handarumukti** (Class of 2014)

Analyst (Manager), Outlook, Review, and Policy Recommendation Division, Department of Macroeconomic Policy, Bank Indonesia



I am very thankful that I got the opportunity to study at GraSPP while I was in my third year at Bank Indonesia (central bank), sponsored by Joint Japan World Bank Graduate Scholarship Program (JJ/WBGSP). This gave me very valuable knowledge for my professional career. Shortly after earning my master's degree at GraSPP, I was

promoted to manager at the Department of Macroeconomic Policy in Bank Indonesia.

The experience of the recent global financial crisis (GFC) showed that the central bank's price stability policy alone could not prevent financial sector turmoil triggered by an over-leveraged financial system. Even the combination of low inflation with strong growth that had been achieved by the US economy for more than two decades ended with a meltdown of the financial system of 2008. A new perspective of macroeconomic management was developed after the

GFC. Excessive leveraging during a boom in the financial system tends to be followed by a big depression. Thus, the role of macroprudential policy to smooth out the business cycle becomes important to promote financial system stability.

In my position as manager in the Outlook, Review, and Policy Recommendation Division, I am responsible for analysing the economic outlook, reviewing materials (assessment) to be presented to the Board of Governor meetings, and implementing reserve requirement policy.

What I learned in GraSPP is readily applicable to my work. Econometrics has equipped me with economic modeling skills very useful to generating a robust economic outlook. Another example is macroeconomics, which has helped sharpen my perspective in understanding and dealing with macroeconomic policies. In addition, international networks that I created during my GraSPP days have expanded my global reach.

## **Eri (Mukae) Nakamura** (Class of 2006)

Assistant Director, Africa Division 1 (Kenya & Somalia), Africa Department, Japan International Cooperation Agency



After graduating from GraSPP, I worked on infrastructure and private sector development at the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). I subsequently joined the South Sudan Office of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The key item on our agenda was creating employment for young people.

Our aim was to enable the public in this conflict-affected region to bring peace dividend and to prevent young people from being recruited into the military. To this end, I worked on vocational training for young people including former soldiers, and on aid for improving the livelihood of young people and women in rural areas.

I then joined the headquarters of the World Bank in Washington DC where I worked for the unit of Financial and Private Sector

Development, Africa Region. I worked on private sector development in North and South Sudan based on my belief that encouraging private sector activity is crucial to employment creation in conflict-affected areas. My tasks included analyzing a value chain for specialty goods produced in Darfur, supervising the on-going Private Sector Development Project and designing the first Investment Climate Assessment for South Sudan. I also visited Nyala, the state capital of South Darfur, to conduct surveys on activities in the private and financial sectors in that region.

A number of seminars were held at the World Bank headquarters on private sector development in conflict-affected areas. This confirmed my understanding that employment creation in these areas is one of the most critical issues in international development. I am currently working in the Africa Department at JICA headquarters on a youth employment program for Somalia.

## **Wilson Tadashi Muraki Junior** (Class of 2013)

Translator and Announcer, NHK World



author in the center

I graduated from GraSPP in 2013, and since then I have been living in Japan. I am originally from Brazil, and after graduating I decided to stay in Japan and try and acquire as much work experience as possible in order to build the foundations of an international career back in my country.

I currently work at NHK World Radio Japan as a translator (English-Portuguese) and announcer. My work mainly involves broadcasting news and cultural programs in Portuguese to audiences in Brazil and Africa. Working at NHK World enables me to keep myself up-to-date on the latest Japanese and global events.

I also work at Peace Community Plan, a social company engaged in community and environmental activities. Most of our work at Peace Community Plan involves CSR projects sponsored by Japanese corporations or projects that we implement with subsidies from the Japanese government. A project related to this company that I am also engaged in is a series of forums named VISIONS. The forums aim

at creating a grassroots platform for the free exchange of ideas among actors involved in promoting disaster resilience in different parts of Asia. Last year, in Bangkok, we gathered around 30 people from countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, India and Japan to discuss how disaster resilience could be improved all over Asia from the community level. One of the outcomes was the chance to spread apps and other IT tools that can support communities when disasters strike.

Having two different jobs is sometimes challenging, because each place demands a lot of time and energy. However, working at two different places has been a good way to learn about various issues and expand my career network. Since each organization has its own rules and characteristics, by comparing both places I have also learned lessons on how to manage people, how to achieve long-term goals and what strategies are more likely to work.

In the future, I intend to go back to my country and use the lessons I have learned to establish my career in a government or an international organization-related agency.

## **Siritala Saengduang** (Class of 2012)

Economist, Bureau of International Economic Policy, Fiscal Policy Office, Ministry of Finance, Thailand



author in the center

After graduating from GraSPP, I have been working in the Fiscal Policy Office of the Ministry of Finance, Thailand. As an economist in the Bureau of International Economic Policy, I am responsible for policy analysis and design as well as strategic planning to bring economic and fiscal

measures in line with Thailand's obligations to international treaties. My other responsibilities include the tariff reduction program.

I have been involved in many rounds of international negotiation under the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), Japan-Thailand Economic Partnership Agreement (JTEPA), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and the World Trade Organization (WTO), to name a few. Flying frequently across the globe has never





## Daniel Beckurts

MPP/IP Year 1 (from Germany)

# International Student Interview

▶ No. 6



### — Where are you from?

I grew up in Cologne having moved there from Munich when I was six. Cologne was an outpost of the Roman Empire, has an age-old rivalry with Düsseldorf, and is home to FC Köln where Tomoaki Makino (Urawa Red Diamonds) used to play. Cologne's famous Kölsch beer goes down very nicely, which is indeed dangerous as one tends to drink more than is good for you. In Germany, the legal drinking age is 16 for beer and wine and 18 for spirits which have a high alcohol content.

My next door neighbor at my home in Cologne is a Japanese woman who married a local. Her house is furnished and decorated in Japanese style, she often treated me to meals which whet my appetite for Japanese food, and I loved listening to her speaking Japanese. She introduced me to the Deutsch-Japanische Gesellschaft e.V. Köln (the German-Japanese Friendship Association in Cologne) which gave me a chance to meet young people from Japan. It was thanks to her that I came to love Japan so much. I developed a particular interest in Japanese architecture, especially the wabi-sabi aesthetic, and I appreciate the works of Tadao Ando for their simplicity. My favorite is the Ando Museum in Naoshima. I first saw it in the Brutus magazine and have since paid a visit.

After my second semester at the University of Cologne, I did a one-year exchange at Hitotsubashi University, which is a partner university of my German home university. Before that I had been to Japan. After graduating high school, I spent three months at a Japanese language school and then did a so-called working holiday for another seven months. I had studied Japanese language by myself while at high school to the point where I could use hiragana and katakana. I registered with World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) and found hosts that would take me on. WWOOF hosts provide free food and lodging in exchange for volunteer work of six hours a day. I spent three months (from December to March) at a pension in the Hakkōda Mountains of Aomori Prefecture, and from then up until May working for an orange farmer in Minamata, Kumamoto Prefecture. I found it a very rewarding time as I thoroughly enjoyed experiencing rural community life for a change.

### — What is your view of present-day Germany?

This year marks the 25th anniversary of German unification. According to a national opinion poll, most residents of what was formerly known as West Germany today feel that the country is completely unified, whereas those from the old East (the new federal states) still don't quite share this view when they compare their situation to those living in the old federal states. One reason for this is that economic disparities and cultural differences to this day still remain. After more than a generation Germany has not entirely managed to overcome these differences. I look forward to a time when these different perceptions have made way and it can genuinely be said that we are unified - not only in a geographical and political sense.

Today, Germany has the second largest population of immigrants after the USA. While Germany faces the same problem as Japan of an aging population and low birth rate, I believe that immigration can play a major role as one of the key factors to solving this problem.

My choice of studying at the University of Tokyo was because I wanted to learn about how Japan, China, and Korea will deal with their territorial disputes. There are many socio-political similarities between Germany and Japan. Now that I have achieved a degree of proficiency in Japanese, my idea is to conduct a comparative analysis using Japan as a base, it being the oldest democracy in East Asia. When I worked at BMW Japan as an intern, I felt that, although their methods are different, Japan and Germany are striving for comparable aims. In both Japan and Germany, small and medium-sized enterprises have a high level of technical know-how with excellent craftspeople ("Meister").

I will be graduating from GraSPP in the autumn of next year. I would very much like to find a job possibly in the German Foreign Office or at an international agency.

(Interview and text by editor)

been easy, but given me a chance to make friends as well as enemies (!) sometimes.

My team's goal is to maximize the benefits for Thailand while contributing to the sustainable development of the world. In order to accomplish our mission, we need to be professional to lead the discussion and convince our counterparts on various issues. Learning from renowned professors at one of the most highly-ranked universities in the world has strengthened my expertise across a wide range of disciplines and given me much confidence in expressing

opinions in an international forum with professionals on the other side of the table.

Studying in GraSPP could be one of the most effective ways to gain not only an in-depth knowledge but also a good conduit to engage with different cultures, customs, people, and languages. In conclusion, I thank GraSPP for opening doors for me to a wide range of international activities that contribute to my professional career and my life.

## Junichi Takahashi (Class of 2006)

Deputy Director, Country Assistance Planning Division II, International Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan



"The goal of foreign policy is to ensure the security and prosperity of the nation. Nothing more, nothing less." Keeping these words by Ambassador Hiroshi Shigeta (from the case study course of Foreign Policy I and II in academic year 2004/2005) in mind, I have been working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan since I completed

my study at GraSPP, with this April marking my tenth year on the job. I currently work in the field of development cooperation (official development assistance, or ODA), spending days and nights thinking over issues and discussing with the relevant people on ways to promote individual policies so as to contribute to the ultimate goal of foreign policy and then turning the results into action. I often think how important my busy but fulfilling days at GraSPP were in building the foundations for my thinking as a would-be "craftsperson" in the field of foreign policy.

Another thing that strikes me about the school is how the network of those associated with GraSPP is also bearing fruit in the world of

public policy. When I was a diplomatic trainee studying in the U.S., I had an opportunity to organize an exchange event between GraSPP and SIPA with Professor Takatoshi Ito, who was at Columbia University at the time (and after a stint back here in Tokyo has since returned to Columbia). When I was working at the Embassy of Japan in Vietnam as a second secretary in charge of political affairs, I bumped into Professor Akira Morita (currently the Director-General of the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research), who was involved in a project for the training of Vietnamese public officials. Recently I also had the chance to go for a drink with alumni from GraSPP working in the ODA field: one was a more recent graduate working in a division in the foreign ministry next to mine and the other a graduate from my own year who works for JICA.

I hope I can maintain the spirit I acquired at GraSPP of aspiring to become a "foreign policy craftsman" rather than simply being an official of the foreign ministry, and keep up with my current and future professional colleagues in the world of public policy. I wish all of you a similar GraSPP and post-GraSPP experience.

## Radhika Aryal (Class of 2012)

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Government of Nepal



Greetings from Nepal!! I feel highly privileged for getting an opportunity to write on behalf of the alumni of GraSPP, where I am among the first batch to graduate from the Master of Public Policy International Program (MPP/IP) in 2010-2012.

My graduation from GraSPP proved to be a milestone in my professional career as I was successful in getting a double promotion from Section Officer to Joint Secretary. It was only possible thanks to my academic horizon being broadened by MPP/IP and a resultant understanding of the different dimensions of development paradigm relevant to Nepal. I always follow the objective approach learned during my GraSPP days for gaining deep insights into policy design and formulation on a global scale, and then try translating it to the local context. This helps me internalize core issues of public policy. My experience in GraSPP has also strengthened my capabilities to analyze public policy options and bring about its

effective implementation.

Dedicated professors and staff, student-friendly teaching methodologies, and a very cooperative management style at GraSPP are highly commendable and will be remembered throughout my lifetime. Easy access to top-level researchers and practitioners as well as daily interaction with students from all over the world at GraSPP enabled me to devote myself to policy studies.

Moreover, memorable features of life in Tokyo include the cleanliness of the environment, soft and supportive nature of the Japanese people, and extremely reliable public transport services, which added value to my rewarding academic life. All these factors broadened my thought horizon and inspired me to commit and devote myself to the pursuit of national development with greater aspiration and motivation.

I highly recommend that young candidates from all over the world win the opportunity to be a part of the GraSPP community, from where you will be able to cultivate a better career avenue for yourself. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

## Topical News

On April 3, more than 80 students from the April intake were invited to a guidance session for new students. After a welcome by Dean Shiroyama and an overview of GraSPP, presentations were given on the cross-disciplinary Global Leading Program for Social Design and Management (GSDM), Science, Technology, and Innovation Governance (STIG) Education and Research Program, and the Ocean Alliance. We hope that the new entrants will make the most of the numerous opportunities available to them.



### Editor's Postscript

I had a eureka moment when I saw the term "GraSPPer" in the article by Professor Nishizawa. I have long been looking for a term that encompasses both current students and alumni. I personally expanded the meaning of GraSPPer to include teachers and staff members. I guess that lurking in the back of my mind was the memorable phrase of our first dean, that "once you get yourself involved in GraSPP, you will never escape its grip." As GraSPP is a homonym of "grasp", a GraSPPer can also be someone who grasps something. I hope that GraSPPers "grasp" something worthwhile while they are here. (Editor)

NEWSLETTER

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