

November 8<sup>th</sup> 2020\_TIAS Research Tour: Osaka (TIAS × CHEZA)



**Sports x International Exchange for Kids**  
**-Connect to Africa from Senri!-**  
**@Senri-chuo Park in Osaka**

**NOTE 1:** The present research is a pilot study to use a new protocol of sports performance test which is being created for the ‘Sports Talent Identification’ in East Africa as part of a TIAS ‘legacy project’ with Alumni in Rwanda, and Tanzania and Uganda coordinated by Prof. Rakwal (Sports Science and Medicine module). Working towards with CHEZA as partners (industry-academia cooperation is the keyword) we hope to progress the educational aspects using sports activity to enhance the value of sports and education in East Africa. Sports talent identification is the first phase of the project. With no protocol of sports performance test along with insufficient information for the procedure and evaluation methods, the team was prompted to develop a new protocol, referring to previous studies, and which needs to be revised based on practical data to enhance the test’s reliability. The aim is that many young kids/pre-schoolers and elementary students will join the events. Point of Caution: TIAS members were made aware of the health ‘safety’ issues and extra-precautions to be taken during the current Covid-19 pandemic conditions, and all members were fully equipped with ‘masks’ and sanitizers/alcohol tissues during the trip; this was repeatedly made clear and emphasized by Prof. Rakwal to all. The same was emphasized by CHEZA in Osaka and during the pre-meetings with STAFFS/VOLUNTEERS. Moreover as we would be working with the kids/children and their parents, all members health before and during the trip was carefully considered.

**NOTE 2:** OUTLINE OF THE EVENT

<b>Time/Date</b>	10:00-16:00 / 8 <sup>th</sup> November, 2020 (Sunday)
<b>Location</b>	Senri-chuo Park (15 min walk from Senri-chuo Station) * See location map below:
<b>Target</b>	Kids and their parents (Mainly elementary school-aged children)
<b>Organized by</b>	Senri Park Life Design Project, co-organized by CHEZA LLC.
<b>Contact Person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tomoko Amemiya: <a href="mailto:tomoko.amemiya@cheza.co.jp">tomoko.amemiya@cheza.co.jp</a> WhatsApp: +81-80-3930-3302</li> <li>Masaaki Nakarai: <a href="mailto:masaaki.nakarai@cheza.co.jp">masaaki.nakarai@cheza.co.jp</a> WhatsApp: +81-80-7039-2424</li> </ul>



Location Map

Transport:

- 21 min from Umeda Station by Osaka Metro Midosuji-Line

### Pre-Event Day=Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> : Move to Osaka from University of Tsukuba

Moving early morning from GSI building, the team members cross-checked the equipment's and all resources necessary for first, carrying out the planned activities and second, conducting the research. Travelling by Tsukuba Express and JR lines to the Bullet Train we reached Shin Osaka station around 1 PM, and immediately after a check-in at the designated hotel, moved by subway to the Senri-Chuo park, walking to the main activity area as designated by CHEZA and Toyanaka-city in the park. Meeting up with **Mr. Masaaki Nakarai and Ms. Tomoko Amemiya, CHEZA founders**, and our partners in this event/activity, we set about conducting a survey of the grounds around 2:45 PM. One of the **TIAS ALUMNI, Ms. Mi AN (TIAS 1<sup>st</sup> BATCH)** joined us from Kyoto University (with permissions for her academic supervisor in the current Covid-19 rules and regulations by the university) to support the research activities as a staff member. Each activity equipment and placed at the respective locations within the designated ground area and checked and practice runs were made by all members, finishing around 5:30 PM. Following that we had a final meeting before the next main day over dinner and rested well for the event after a long day.



### Event Day=Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> : Move to Senri-Chuo Koen (park)

Starting early morning for the location venue for the event at – **TIAS students under team leadership of Mr. Takafumi Tomura (5<sup>th</sup> batch) for the SPORTS PERFORMANCE TEST & PARENT-KIDS GYMNASTICS and Dr. Kazuhiro Kajita (TIAS Researcher, and Leader for the SPORTS CLASS)** set up the field area as planned and discussed on the previous evening (7<sup>th</sup> Nov.). The participating students were **Ms. Kae Ebihara, Ms. Hada Atiyeh and Mr. Kai Png – all**

of the 5<sup>th</sup> Batch. As mentioned above, Ms. Mi AN (1<sup>st</sup> Batch-TIAS Alumni) again came to support the activities from Kyoto. The meeting between CHEZA and TIAS and all volunteer's for the event was held at 9 AM and each activity was reviewed and roles re-checked. The details are below: All the activities were conducted successfully and **17 children actively participated in all the TESTING** and around **113 parents/kids** was either participating in the **PLAY CLASS** and **INTERNATIONAL LEARNING WITH AFRICA**.

**"Let's learn about Africa by enjoying English communications and Sports!"**

Quiz or small presentation on Africa and physical exercises using simple English phrases,

like "Jump!", "Squat!", "Forward!", "Backward!", etc.

50 mins each

**Parent-kid Gymnastics**

Easy gymnastic exercises for kids and their parents.

20 mins each

**Sports Class for Kids** supervised by **TIAS** (<http://tias.tsukuba.ac.jp/>)

Short lessons on running and throwing by national level athletes.

20 mins each

**Sports Performance Test for Kids** supervised by **TIAS** (<http://tias.tsukuba.ac.jp/>)

This is a program to assess sports performance of kids through 8 items of sports performance tests. As a result, kids will receive a result sheet with recommendations on suitable sports and training menu. A professor and a few researchers/students will join the event from the **TIAS program**, which is based at University of Tsukuba – one of the top universities in physical education field in Japan.

Open during the event

**Time Schedule**

Time	Activity	Performance Test
9:00 – 10:00	Venue Set-up	
10:00 – 10:20	Parent-kid Gymnastics	Open anytime
10:30 – 10:50	Sports Class	
11:00 – 11:50	"Learn Africa through Sports" Activity	
12:00 – 13:00	LUNCH BREAK	
13:00 – 13:20	Parent-kid Gymnastics	Open anytime
13:30 – 13:50	Sports Class	
14:00 – 14:50	"Learn Africa through Sports" Activity	
14:55 – 15:15	Parent-kid Gymnastics	
15:20 – 15:40	Sports Class	
15:40 – 16:30	"Learn Africa through Sports" Activity	
16:30 – 17:00	Venue Dismantling	



**The START of the DAY, Nov., 8<sup>th</sup> 2020**



## Final Day=Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> : Move from Osaka to Tsukuba

The final day was a check of all equipment and health of the TIAS members and we moved back to Tsukuba. Discussing the previous day's events was also a part of the return journey, despite the tiredness which was sweet due to the great experience of all members; and as can be seen below in each student's comments/impressions/networking. All staffs/students reached safely to Tsukuba via the Bullet train/TX journey.

### **EACH MEMBER IMPRESSIONS**

**Dr. Kazuhiro KAJITA (TIAS Researcher):** **International exchange through sports** is an **essential educational activity** as a legacy program of TIAS at University of Tsukuba (part of the Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences and Graduate School of Comprehensive Human Sciences). On this research tour, TIAS and CHEZA collaborated to conduct a **pilot study to create a program to support sports education in East Africa**. With the cooperation and support of Toyonaka City officials and JICA alumni and other volunteers, it was also a trial for the **development of a new network of community support projects** through sports. We found that the practice of combining the **Sports Performance Test and Sports Classroom Activities**, a new program that we had been meeting and planning before the day of the event, was **enjoyed by children of all ages**, from infants to children. We also found that there were **parent's expectations** for their children to improve their motor skills and their interest in sports performance testing was seen through **active and enthusiastic participation**. We believe that we were able to teach parents the importance of developing their children's motor skills while allowing them to experience a **variety of physical activities**. This was a valuable experience for the TIAS students and the **international students from Benin** (2 student's from this **West African country** joined together as a team) who participated as staff members, and I believe that it created a **great deal of motivation and expectations for their future research, education and career development**. However, the pilot study showed us that there are still many **challenges and problems** to be solved in implementing a similar program in East Africa or Africa in general. On the other hand, we were reminded of the **decline** of Japanese children's motor skills and physical strength, with many children having difficulty with unusual movements such as side-stepping and ball throwing. With the number of children playing baseball in Japan decreasing every year, we were able to reaffirm the importance of introducing baseball lessons into the program of such events so that the children **can experience the fun and excitement of baseball**. It will be a major mission after hosting the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics for TIAS graduates and University of Tsukuba faculty and staff to work together to figure out **what we can offer and support children with a bright future through sports**. It also became clear that there is a need to explore the possibilities of international sports exchange events that make **effective use of public parks** like this one, with the aim of **increasing the physical fitness and athletic ability of children as well as the amount of physical activity of their parents**. The event was held in the COVID-19 era, and there were more preparations than usual to deal with and countermeasures to be taken, so we would like to **thank once again the support and cooperation of many people** who made the international exchange event a success. We hope that the international educational activities through sports **provided and supported by TIAS** will continue.

**Mr. Takafumi TOMURA (5<sup>th</sup> Batch student):** My roles in the research tour were to create the protocol of sports performance test, to **compile the travel itinerary**, to be an **instructor for Parent and Child Exercise and Sports Class for Kids** and to oversee whole of the sports performance test. The experience and learning from the research tour were very beneficial for **expanding my perspectives as a developing researcher to recognize the demand in terms of sports activity from real parents and children**. Moreover, I reconfirmed that initiatives including physical activity elements needed to provide the participants with a **joyful experience to boost their motivation and to engage in an active lifestyle**. Ordinarily, children like to play outside, and parents are required to provide the opportunity for children to support children' physical and mental development. As such this activity/event can be a great supporter of parents to bring their children naturally and be the opportunity for parents to learn (observe) how the learning experience is crucial for children. I really appreciate the **invitation from CHEZA to join in the events as a supporter, and which was also most beneficial to collect the research data and questionnaire survey**, and support my final research project and increase my knowledge. Finally, with such a great experience and networking with like-minded sports loving volunteers in Osaka, I am more motivated and eager to organize the events such as **international sports exchange** again in the future to accelerate the learning journey as a TIAS student.

**Ms. Kae EBIHARA (5<sup>th</sup> Batch student):** I am extremely grateful for this **opportunity to participate in the event as a staff**. I worked as a staff for measuring the **children's fitness level** under the 'Sports Performance Test' part. My international classmates (Kai Png, from Australia) and one TIAS international alumni (Mi An, from China, now a PhD student in Kyoto University) worked together with me. Working together at such a public event and collecting data **was a tough job but a wonderful learning**. I think that it is good experience for not only students but also the children who participated in the event because they could **communicate** with international persons during the activities. As for my role during the event, it was first time for me to support physical fitness test targeting the children. This time, the participants were mainly children aged 7 or under. I have less opportunity to deal with those small children in my regular life. Therefore, it was very **unique experience** to me. I **learned how to explain** what the children should do for the fitness test in an easy understandable way by **observing the actions of other volunteer staff**, who were more experienced than me. Most of them were **OG or OB of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JICA)**. So, they are good at communicating with different people and across cultures. I was able to get to know such people thanks to this tour. Other than the research data collection duty, these **human experiences gained through this tour** will be helpful in my future life.

**Ms. Hada ATIYEH (5<sup>th</sup> Batch student):** The collaboration between CHEZA and TIAS program was both a **learning experience and a sport-cultural exchange** between members of CHEZA and the Japanese parents who brought their children to be tested. During the experiment, I got to be a part of a team that worked coherently to achieve a **targeted goal which was making the sport performance test for elementary students a success**. I was impressed with the **ethics and the method the research** was conducted while having **volunteers who did not hesitate to lend a hand** when in need. Not only the event went by smoothly, as volunteers we got to see a **holistic view of how the data collection method is done in a public setting and the obstacles one might face during data collection**, as a result, to learn from this experience, be better prepared, and avoid in future research.

Nonetheless, it was an entertaining and beneficial experience for both volunteers and the elementary students' parents who participated in the sport performance test. I would like to thank the CHEZA organization for inviting the TIAS program to be involved in a **fruitful experience**.

**Mr. Kai PNG (5<sup>th</sup> Batch student):** The trip to Osaka was a great learning experience in **understanding the work that goes on behind the scenes for an event** and the **complications that occur as a result of human nature**. It was great to work with members from another organisation (CHEZA) and the volunteers who were mostly from JICA-OBs and OGs) with **shared interests towards a common goal**. The event itself was **long and tedious** but throughout I was impressed with the organisation that went into making it possible. I believe the parents and the children who participated enjoyed the event and both organisations benefitted from the data collected. I was involved in the first series of tests – for Sports Performance for the Kids – Body Measurements – and supporting other tests and activities during the day-long event. During my experience it was **great to be a part of the team** and to also meet and talk in depth to previous students as well as staff from CHEZA as I was able to **broaden my understanding of the different opportunities sport offers**. Overall the event served to be a wonderful experience and will be fondly remembered.

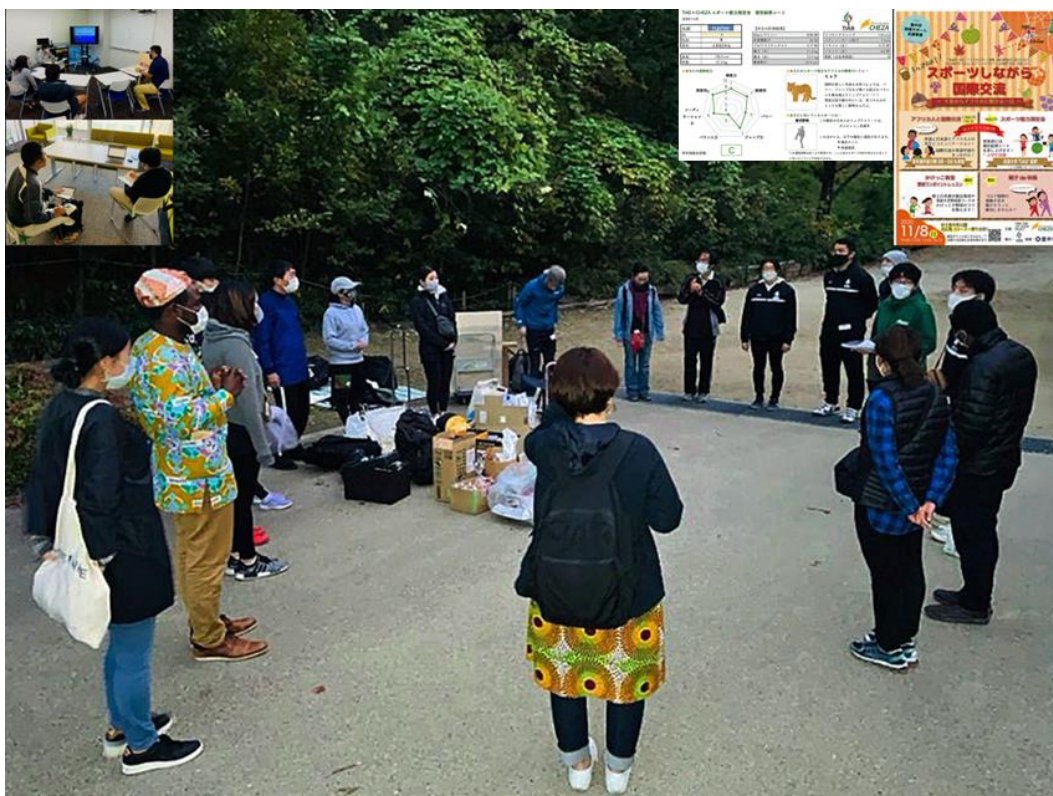
**Ms. Mi AN (TIAS alumni; 1<sup>st</sup> Batch):** I personally think the idea of organizing this event is amazing. Both parents and children spent long time staying at home in 2020 and this event makes it such a great chance for them to **stretch their bodies outdoors and get to know about people from different cultures**. As one of the **TIAS alumni**, it was nice meeting TIAS last (5<sup>th</sup>) batch junior students and make new connections with **people who are enthusiastic about sports for development, international communications**. I was amazed by my juniors. They have so many practical experiences in their own field, and I am so happy to see the **TIAS networking is growing bigger and stronger**. Collaborations with other organizations like CHEZA and JICA is always wise. It increases the possibility for us to carry on new projects together in the future. The task I was assigned is a bit boring but critical to the research - measuring the height, weight and length of shoulders and legs of children, and as that was the duty assigned to me I was happy to be part of the testing and event. It is important to mention that the data for the body measurements might not be so accurate with the thick winter jackets and pants on; however, this was **good learning of the challenges and improvement in the next phase**. On the other hand, I also got to support other sessions for the daily-event and it was **lovely to see how children** got involved in both doing sports and learning African cultures happily. Overall it was a pleasurable experience.

**Ms. Tomoko AMEMIYA (CHEZA Co-Representative):** First of all, I would like to thank the TIAS team and all other **supporters** to make our first of its kind event successful. I was happy to see many kids and parents enjoying playing sports during our event. It was also really a nice opportunity for different actors such as **TIAS, Toyonaka City officials, Africans in Kansai (2 Beninese), ex-JICA volunteers, friends to meet and network** under common interests for “**sports**”, “**kids**”, and “**Africa**”. There are many **challenges** and **lessons** learned from the event as well. Although the sports performance test went successful as our first public trial, I believe it has a **potential** to become more **attractive, valuable and of quality** as we continue. Making use of the lessons learned we hope **TIAS-CHEZA joint research program** continues to earn more **data** and more experiences to reinforce the program and make impacts in **sports and education in Africa and Japan**.

**Mr. Masaaki NAKARAI (CHEZA Co-Representative):** I would like to show my **deep appreciation to the TIAS members and all supporters** who joined this event. Because of organized and powerful supports, we could see **big smiles of kids and their parents** without any troubles. According to **staff from Toyonaka City** which manages the event site (Senri-chuo Park) this is the first event ever to utilize open space of the Park. Therefore, they also paid attention to **reactions from event participants**. In fact, **four (4) staff** from different departments of the City came and observed during the event day. They were surprised that more than expected local people joined to the event and enjoyed the activities, and were satisfied on the event organizing. From this perspective, I understood that we could say the **event could contribute on activation of local community**. And of cause, this event was **fruitful for TIAS-CHEZA joint research program**. Concept of this event was discussed at the **first TIAS and CHEZA meeting in Kigali, Rwanda (2018)**, and finally we could organize the event. I really appreciate on this continuous relationship and expect this step will reach to East Africa someday. Since a **model** of event could be developed, we keep polishing by utilizing challenges which we found through the event, and expect to organize another round sooner in Tsukuba or Kansai.

### SUMMARY

This research tour aimed to collect the data by using a new protocol of sports performance test. CHEZA (hosting company for the event) organizes the international sports and culture event at Senri-Chuo park and TIAS is a 'support partner' for the event through implementation of the sports performance test and sports activities such as parent-child exercise and coaching the running activity and baseball. **Multiple pre-meetings were done and zoom sessions organized to fulfil the objectives of November 8<sup>th</sup>.**





The main event was successfully held on the second day (11/08, Sunday) during the research tour. To prepare for the test implementation, TIAS member met with CHEZA at Senri-Chuo park on the first day (11/07, Sat) for a final discussion and confirmation of the contents. Further, a feedback meeting was held after the main event to discuss and analyze the data from the event and to discuss the feedback and future development. Finally, the research tour concluded by returning safely to Tsukuba on day 3 following the post-event discussion on the return journey (morning to afternoon/evening of 11/09, Monday). The collected data will be used to revise the protocol of sports performance test that is the first aim of the research tour. Furthermore, participating TIAS students are expected to improve social and educational skills in the event through the interaction with Japanese children, JICA OB/OGs and others. It was also an important chance to **meet members of ASICS Corporation**, who were interested to see such an activity/event having **PLAY and FUN and RESEARCH** at its base, and were more interested to visit TIAS and discuss possible cooperation/collaboration. The interaction with the **2 students** from the **West African country BENIN** was a **great chance to learn about their 'sports culture' and challenges**, and it was decided to introduce TIAS2.0 and University of Tsukuba to Benin and their sport organizations/officials. As TIAS students, it is required to expand the perspective of sports and physical education by interaction with Japanese and International, including such activities where they can take a participatory role and not just be observers. This was **an important exercise in NETWORKING and INTERNATIONALIZATION for the TIAS 5<sup>th</sup> Batch students and understanding the SPORTING and PARK PLAY CULTURE of the people of Japan**, especially the **young kids and their parents**.

**Thank you CHEZA, colleagues and supporters at Toyonaka-shi, Osaka, including the JICA OB/OGs in and around Osaka for supporting the event; we continue the cooperation with research-education and sports business-community engagement as our focus. Thank you TIAS for the permission's and funding for student's research tour.**

2020.11.17

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**LINKS:**

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<http://tias.tsukuba.ac.jp/tias2/>  
<https://www.cheza.co.jp/>