

## **JAPAN'S GRANT AID BOOSTS SA COMMUNITY IN EDUCATION**

The Embassy of Japan joined hands with the Kagiso Shanduka Trust (KST) and the Free State Department of Education in order to benefit a community of children in need. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2018, Mr. Shigeyuki Hiroki, the Ambassador of Japan to the Republic of South Africa, was in the township of Botshabelo in the Free State, for a handover ceremony of four classrooms at R1.4 million being donated to Mpolokeng Primary School. The classrooms were received with much gratitude by the principal, the school governing body, teachers, pupils and the community at large, along with Free State MEC of Education, Mr Tate Makgoe, and KST Board of Trustees Chairperson and CEO of Kagiso Trust, Ms Mankodi Moitse.



*Mr. Shigeyuki Hiroki, the Ambassador of Japan to SA, delivered his message of support for education in front of SA students*

Hiroki delivered his message of support for education in South Africa, saying, “The goal in building these classrooms is to achieve excellence in education, as well as to empower the community of Botshabelo. By building classrooms, we trust that Mpolokeng Primary school can gain the ability to admit more students, and to provide high quality education for those to come, along with existing students.”

KST is a collaboration between the Kagiso Trust and the Cyril Ramaphosa Foundation. The focus of KST is on working with public and private institutions in order to empower learners with the kind of education that equips and readies them to be functional contributors in South African society. In the Fezile Dabi and Motheo Districts (Mpolokeng Primary School being in the latter), KST is in the

middle of implementing what is known as the District Whole School Development Programme (DWSDP). As far back as 2013, the amount of money committed to DWSDP by KST was R200 million over five years. The Free State Department of Education matched this amount, making the total R400 million, and other donors subsequently came on board. The Embassy of Japan, through the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP), is the latest such donor to join.

“In South Africa, the GGP began its work in 1990, by providing assistance to educational institutions, medical institutions and non-government organisations. To date, over 600 GGP projects have been implemented in the country, with the aim of improving the educational environment, health services, vocational training and other basic human needs at grassroots level,” said Hiroki. Providing four classrooms may be a “nice-to-have” in other global contexts, but in South Africa, it is absolutely necessary at times. Here, it may be the difference between children having a roof under which to learn, or taking lessons in battered classrooms, or in open environments where they are vulnerable to the elements. In certain cases, one may find that there are too many students per class and per teacher. The desirable or ideal Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) is 30:1, according to the Department of Basic Education. Mpolokeng Primary School was well above this ratio at 53:1. In fact, the new donated classrooms by the Embassy of Japan will result in the improved situation to 44:1. While this is not a complete resolution of the problem, it is a positive step in the right direction.



*Mr. Shigeyuki Hiroki, the Ambassador of Japan to SA, spent time with local students at the newly donated classrooms*

Hiroki concluded, “The Sotho Idiom says; ‘A tree is known by the fruits it bears’, we, as the Japanese people and government wish to be known by our commitment to working together with communities to improve the lives of those who are in need. In this regard, I would like to thank the Free State Department of Education, under the leadership of MEC Herbert Makgoe for a successful partnership. Additionally, I would like to thank KST for the good work they do for schools. Finally, I would like to thank the principal, teachers, and parents of Mpolokeng Primary School, for their dedication to building a brighter future for the students. You have truly shown the spirit of Ubuntu.”



*Free State MEC of Education, Mr Tate Makgoe, and KST Board of Trustees Chairperson and CEO of Kagiso Trust, Ms Mankodi Moitse also attended the ceremony.*

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