

ANNUAL REPORT 2020 OF THE SJCC SCHOLARSHIP FUND

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Executive Summary

- Since its establishment in 1988 our Scholarship Fund has granted scholarships to 229 qualified candidates amounting to approx. CHF 3'000'000.
- In 2018, a new partnership agreement for the Scholarship Fund was concluded with the Swiss Chamber Commerce & Industry in Japan (SCCIJ). The partnership with SCCIJ over the last few years has been very good and beneficial for the Scholarship Fund and its recipients, enabling this big milestone. From now on the Fund will be referred to as “Swiss-Japan Scholarship Fund - powered by SCCIJ and SJCC.”
- In 2020, 11 individuals submitted the extensive formal documents required to apply for a scholarship. 5 were finally chosen to receive scholarships. The actual number of interested individuals is always much higher. However, many individuals refrain from applying after familiarising themselves with the requirements.
- Scholarship Fund had an accumulated surplus of CHF 202,018 at year end.
- The Corona pandemic also had an impact on the scholarship recipients, but did not stop the program.
- For the first time, we also awarded a scholarship to a recipient from Japan spending a year in Switzerland

1. Introduction

Like any other organization, the Scholarship Fund was impacted by the Corona pandemic in 2020. However, the program continued at its full strength: 11 applications and 5 awarded scholarships are figures comparable to previous years. It was the recipients who were faced with challenges: the economic situation made the search for internship harder, travelling into Japan became a complicated adventure, and social distancing made it harder to get started in a new country. The resilience and positive attitude shown by the recipients is impressive and is a positive take-away from (ongoing) difficult times.

In 2020, the Scholarship Fund made another major step: The first recipient was awarded a scholarship for a “Year in Switzerland”. We are looking forward to receiving Kazuaki Nishioka in Switzerland in spring 2021. The scholarship fund keeps making a lasting contribution towards bilateral understanding and cooperation between Japan and Switzerland.

We wish to thank our sponsors who are making all this possible and remained at our side during these difficult times. A special thank goes to our partner school JSL and the two chambers and all its members! It is their continuous support that has laid the financial foundation to realise this important investment into future Swiss-Japan business relations!

We are closing this introduction on a sad note: Mr. Paul Dudler, former Chairman of the Scholarship Fund has passed away on February 7th, 2021. Our deepest thoughts and sympathies are with Paul Dudler’s family during this difficult time.

2. Scholarship Applications

Summary 2020

11 formal applications

5 scholarships granted

The actual number of interested individuals is always much higher. However, many individuals refrain from applying after familiarising themselves with the requirements and all the documents that need to be prepared for this purpose.

3. Profiles of Scholarship Candidates / Recipients in 2020

Pro Memoria: Typical profile of a scholarship candidate

- Female or male graduate from university or qualified professional with apprenticeship
- Age less than 32 years, resident of Switzerland or Japan
- Has already acquired good basic knowledge of spoken and written Japanese preparing for his/her Japan training. Candidates from Japan have acquired a good level of an official Swiss language.
- Highly motivated and committed to a year abroad in Japan or Switzerland consisting of 3-6 m intensive language study and 6-9 months internship in a l company
- Well balanced and positive personality with clear goals and willingness to adapt to different customs and culture
- Displays an entrepreneurial spirit and risk tolerance

Five individuals were newly chosen for the scholarship program in 2020.

Their personalities, educational qualifications and, notably, motivation have been verified in two personal interviews. The respective conclusions and recommendations were then discussed in the Scholarship Committee which ultimately decided on scholarships. This procedure has over the years ensured a minimal failure rate, i.e. only 6 scholarship recipients (out of 239) have not completed their "SJCC Japan Year".

4. Finances

Our Balance Sheet remained very healthy with an accumulated surplus (cash at banks) of CHF 202,018 at year-end. Contingent Liabilities, i.e. outstanding but committed scholarship payments amounted to JPY 6'500'000 to be carried forward to 2021.

We have been very fortunate to have received donations from the following companies: JSL Academy CHF 3'000. Additionally significant contributions were received from the Swiss Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry in Japan (SCCIJ) amounting to CHF 16'788 and SJCC amounting to CHF 20'000.

We are very glad and encouraged by the steady increase in sponsors and the strong partnership with the SCCIJ.

5. SJCC Young Professionals (formerly SJCC Alumni Association)

Our alumni association founded in April 2002 with activities in Switzerland and Japan primarily serves scholarship recipients as a platform for further developing their knowledge and experience of Japan. On December 5th 2016, the SJCC Alumni Organisation association has been renamed to "SJCC Young Professionals". Foremost to welcome and include young people who may not (yet) be scholarship recipients but have professional interest in Japan or simply would like to network with like-minded people.

In Japan it is also a "home away from home" supporting new arrivals in various administrative procedures, recommending internship opportunities, contacts with the Embassy of Switzerland, the Swiss Business Hub Japan, the Swiss Chamber of Commerce & Industry in Japan etc.

Upon return to Switzerland all registered alumni are offered a free initial membership in the Chamber. Thus, both institutions can share and benefit from each other's experience, knowledge and competence. I may also mention here that the President of the Alumni Association serves on the Executive Committee of the Chamber.

6. Strong partnership with SCCIJ

Due to the excellent cooperation between the SCCIJ and SJCC, it was decided in 2017 to create a joint working committee to come up with a working proposal to establish a joint fund. This work was successfully concluded in 2018 and a new partnership agreement has come into effect. The partnership with SCCIJ over the last few years has been very good and beneficial for the Scholarship Fund and its recipients enabling this big milestone. From now on the Fund will be referred to as "Swiss-Japan Scholarship Fund - powered by SCCIJ and SJCC."

The SCCIJ provides excellent personal support to the new arriving scholarship recipients and even offers a free membership as well. Two Board Members represent the SCCIJ in the Scholarship Committee and actively participate in the work and discussions.

7. Acknowledgements

On behalf of the SJCC, the Scholarship Fund and myself I wish to extend our gratitude to

- the Japanese Embassy in Bern, H.E. Ambassador Kojiro Shraishi
- the Swiss Embassy in Tokyo, H.E. Ambassador Dr. Andreas Baum
- the Swiss Business Hub, Claudio Mazzucchelli
- our sponsor, JSL Academy, Tokyo & Okinawa
- our strong, joint partner the Swiss Chamber of Commerce & Industry in Japan (SCCIJ) in Tokyo, its BOD and its former President Michael Mroczek and its new President André Zimmermann. Dieter Sommerhalder and Luca Orduna from the SCCIJ have made outstanding contributions to the successful partnership through participation in the joint working committee,

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interview process, and implementing a very professional support program for recipients once they arrive in Japan

- and all former donors
- the BOD of the Swiss-Japanese Chamber of Commerce (SJCC) in Zurich, its President, Martin Herb and its Managing Director Dominique Ursprung
- the SJCC Young Professionals in Switzerland and their President, Jacqueline Tschumi
- Martin Stricker, who brought the scholarship fund during his tenure as a chairman to a new level and did an excellent job in handing over his activities in 2019

for their continued interest in our activities, their support and guidance. As previously mentioned, the SJCC Scholarship Fund is solely dependent on its sponsors for financing its scholarships. All donations without deductions are exclusively being used for funding scholarships, thus, helping to develop a growing pool of well-educated young professionals with an international mindset, a strong rooting in the Japanese business environment and, likewise, a familiarity with Japan's culture, social and business practices. They serve the needs of our industry (Japan being the 3rd largest export market for Switzerland), educational institutions and government administration with their professional qualifications and enthusiasm.

SWISS-JAPANESE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (SJCC)
Chairman of the Scholarship Fund
Philipp Saurer