

My name is Kazi Lynne Imali. I was invited and participated in the Korean language learning programme in South Korea. It began on June 2, 2014 and ended on September 26, 2014. Twenty (20) students from eleven (11) countries who are learning Korean language participated. From Kenya were 2 representatives, Mohamed Abdullatif and I, both from The University of Nairobi.

We arrived on June 3rd and had an orientation meeting at Koica ICC. We had a trip around Seoul the next day, viewing prominent features such as the palace, and we learned how to use the subway transportation. On 5th we headed to Soon Chun Hyang University in Asan City and had our orientation as well as settling in. On 6th we had a tour of Asan and museum of the Great General Lee Soon Shin.

From the 2nd week onwards we had our classes which included Korean Speaking, Reading, Listening and Writing from Monday to Friday, starting at 9a.m to 4.30pm. What we learned during the week was examined on Friday afternoon. We were grouped into Beginner and Intermediate classes after taking a level test and I was in the Intermediate class and was also voted class representative. From 4.30p.m to midnight we had free time in which we studied and went shopping in the neighbouring city, Cheonan. During the weekends we would go shopping with friends or go to Seoul's amusement parks. We had the Korean TOPIK exam scheduled for July 20th and until then, we had special classes to prepare for the exam everyday from 2.30p.m to 4.30p.m. Everyone passed the exam and got a certificate.

After the TOPIK exam we had field trips, essay writing and action plan in August and September. We went to Jeonju for 2 days and 1 night, passing by Baekje palace on our way back. Later we went to Busan for 3days and 2nights and stopped by Samsung Company, POSCO factory and the Haeundae beach. Lastly, we spent 2days and 1night on a trip to the DMZ in Paju and a trip to Seoul. On the essay, we were to choose one of seven topics about Korea and our countries, then write similarities and differences between the 2 countries as well as what can be done to improve their relations. I wrote about the comparison of Korean and Kenyan culture. After the essay presentation we began preparing the action plan in which we presented ideas and suggestions on ways in which Korean culture can be introduced and spread in our countries, in my case, in Kenya. Both the writing and presentations were done in Korean only. In September we were invited to two shows, "Quiz on Korea" and "Immortal Song" at KBS T.V station in Seoul.

We had our final exam on the second last Friday and in the final week we prepared and presented our action plans. On the final Thursday afternoon we had a writing contest and at night we had dinner with our teachers. Early on Friday 26th September, we had a closing ceremony in which the Kenya team was awarded for Best Action Plan. We then had lunch and since the Kenyan team's flight was earlier than therest, we had to leave earlier. We headed to the Incheon Airport as the rest went to the Koica ICC since they were leaving on 27th and 28th of September.

I am very grateful to The University of Naurobi and Koica for giving me the opportunity to experience and to learn a lot about Korean culture, which I had always been very much interested in. I also got to know more about Korea-Kenya relations and ways in which the relations can be improved. I hope to use the knowledge I acquired in matters of relations between Korea and Kenya to improve our relations now and in the future.