

HALF – TERM REPORT FOR INTERNSHIP AT  
SHIRAI GROUP CO.  
TOKYO, JAPAN  
by  
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# Contents

- Introduction
- Marketing Camp
- Kenyan Embassy
- Graduate Recruitment
- AIESEC World Gate
- Neighborhood Recycling Event
- English Class
- Caribbean Tour
- Waste Management Truck tours
- AIESEC Camp
- Elementary School Presentation
- Stakeholders Meeting at TMG/CAT 23
- Market research Presentation to TMG
- Business Meetings with Shirai Group
- Social Media

## Flow

- My Experience
- Lesson Learnt
- Taking it forward

## Introduction:

I arrived in Japan on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2012 and on the next day I was already visiting the Shirai Group office. I had a great warm welcome party in the evening and started work the next day. My first major experience with Shirai group was the introduction to everyone and my presentation on Waste Management in Kenya

# Waste Management in Kenya

## Presentation at Shirai Group Co TFO



Researching and presenting the state of the waste management sector in Kenya was my 1<sup>st</sup> task from when I was in Kenya before arriving in Japan. It can be said I actually started working before entering Japan.

I discovered a lot of information about the Waste Management sector globally and also in Kenya that gave me great insights and a renewed interest in the importance of Urban Planning and Design as the world looks into the future and especially as Kenya grows economically. The more income a county has the more waste according to the statistics in the “What a Waste” World Bank report.

The main parts of the reports showed the statistics of projected waste production in Kenya till 2025 and the current capacities in cities such as Kisumu, Nairobi, Mombasa and Nakuru to handle waste. From the source of data was that Nairobi has a full landfill which the Japanese Government is assisting in relocating to Ruai on the outskirts of Nairobi.

It is also noticeable how small scale recycling, Biogas production and Social Businesses are trying to fill in the gaps by the stretched capabilities of Municipal councils and the government.

With the right partnerships with countries like Japan and the expertise here the progress already made can be improved on for better waste management.

# Marketing Camp



On the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend of the Internship I attended the Annual Marketing Camp.

Here the company strategizes with the different teams from the different branched and departments on how to increase the market share and efficiency of services.

AIESEC was also invited to contribute in the International Team

The company also used this event for its Reward and Recognition and Team building activities bringing together the whole company's marketing team.

What I got from this was the unique blend of Business thinking from America and Japan. The benefits of using a methodology for the Marketing and Sales process and focus on fact and logic.

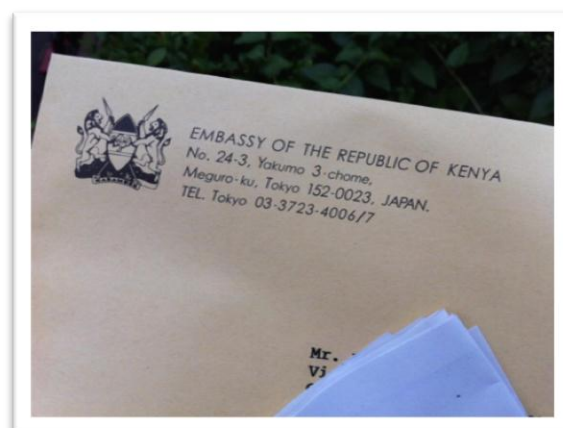


# Kenyan Embassy Japan



In the picture we have Mr. Paul Ndungu the Deputy Head of Mission at the Kenyan Embassy in Japan, Mr Chiaki Takiguchi-san the Chief Marketing officer of Shirai Group Co. and Mutembei Kariuki and intern at the Shirai group and writer of this

The Kenyan Embassy in Japan gave us a warm welcome and was gracious enough to write and recommendation letter for a training at the most advanced waste management facility in Japan. Without this letter the Tokyo Metropolitan Government would not have granted and Internship at the Shinkoto Plant which is the biggest and most advanced incineration plant in Japan. I am sincerely grateful to the Kenyan Ambassador to Japan and the Embassy of Kenya staff for their support.



# Graduate Recruitment

Shirai Group is undertaking a recruitment of recent graduates for the next intake into the Sales and Marketing department.

I was able to sit in on the interviews and see how the selection process happens.

It is a grueling process involving 3 rounds of shortlisting and then personal interviews before a person is selected.

They were asked to do exercises such as presenting each other as candidates focusing on each other's strengths. They were also asked to do a Psychometric test that is very accurate.

Over all my learning was about how much companies invest in recruiting good talent.

I remember being told that the most important thing the company looks for is attitude and the ability to communicate with people. Skills can be built within the company once the person has high intelligence to be accepted.

# AIESEC WorldGate



Tokyo University is considered the best university in Japan and as such AIESEC Japan is composed of some of the best young minds in Japan.

Shirai Group Co. was invited to present and speak to the students at a special event for those students looking to go for an international Internship through AIESEC Tokyo University.

I was asked to give a session on what one can learn from Traveling.

This took quite some reflection on the experiences I have had in the 27 countries I have traveled to so far.

The Key Messages I came up with were:

- Travel to remove your biases about the world and experience things as they are not what the media says.
- Travel to learn how to communicate and do business with other cultures this is going to be very important in a globalized world like the one that is developing



- Traveling teaches you how to identify people and their motives and then be able to work with all kinds of people.
- The networks you make while traveling if you keep them well will give you opportunities beyond any other investment.



# Neighbourhood Recycling Event June and July



Every month on a one Sunday Shirai group organises a recycling day at the Shikahama base in the city of Adachi-ku. Residents bring in their recyclables which are weighed and they are compensated a small amount to do this saving the company transport costs.

There is also a 2<sup>nd</sup> Hand Shop to sell those items that still have value.

The lesson from this event is that it takes a lot of work and commitment including education from all stakeholders to ensure that waste is managed well.

# Company English Class for TFO

Shirai Group Co. is the example of a very forward thinking and progressive Japanese company. With the recognition that the business language of the world is English Shirai Group has encourages its personnel to learn and practice English. Its international ambitions mean that they have had 6 international Interns through AIESEC.

In my capacity as a Trainee and also a Native English speaker I delivered a full day of conversation practice for my colleagues engaging them in conversations on various topics to improve conversational skills.

I learnt from this how important language is in communicating and one should not be shy while learning a language thus I am continuously practicing trail and error on my Japanese also.

Something else I observed is that any organization that wants to survive in the business environment of the future has to embrace multilingualism in the office just as Shirai group has English, Japanese, Chinese and now a Kiswahili speaker among other languages from interns who have been at Shirai Group Co.

# Caribbean Waste Management Tour partnership with JICA



Shirai Group Co. is very conscious of its CSR role and the International development hence it works closely with JICA to share waste management knowledge in Japan with other countries.

On this occasion I was part of the team that had come from some of the Caribbean Islands of St.Lucia, Guadaloupe, Dominica, Belize and Suriname.

We toured some of the facilities for Waste Management in Tokyo:

At one of the Buildings in Tokyo that is a client of Shirai Group and 2 time winner of Tokyo Metropolitan Government award for excellence in Waste Management we learn how the Government of Japan in 1992 passed a law requiring all building to manage their waste. We saw the basement area where Garbage is sorted and also learnt how they building has contacted a company to compost organic waste and also make fertilizers.

We went to the ERP private Incineration and Energy plant where we learnt about advanced medical waste management and also Waste to Energy technologies.

We also visited a government Incineration and sorting plant where we learnt about the different categories and history of waste Management in Japan.

1. Non-Combustibles- Plastics, Metals and others
2. Combustibles-Wood, food waste, some forms of paper and others
3. Bulky- Large house hold waste like cabinets, chairs, Mattresses
4. Recyclables- Paper, Cardboard and others

# Waste Management Truck Route Tour

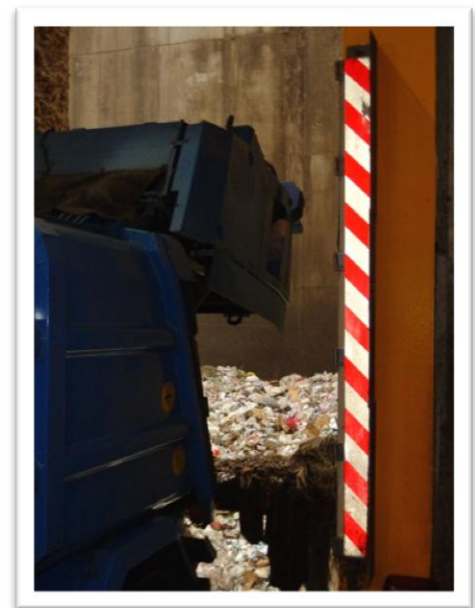
## 1. Combustibles



Shirai Group Co's core business is the hauling of waste from commercial and domestic residence to the area of disposal hence I had a tour with the trucks that form the core of the business. I was on 3 truck over 3 days in Tokyo.

Day 1: Was collection and disposal at the incineration plant of combustible waste from commercial establishments such as daycare centers, restaurants and office blocks.

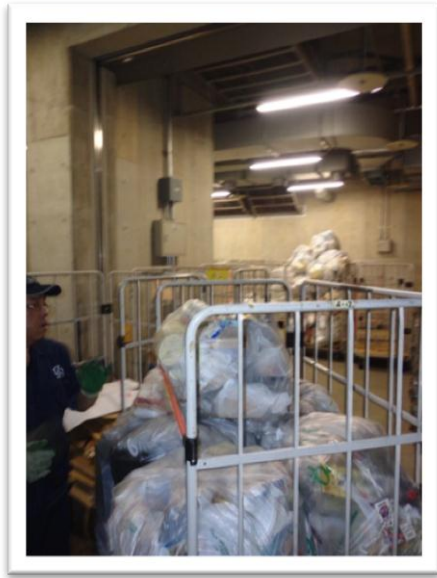
We then drove this to the incineration plant where we got the weighed and then deposited them.



My Biggest Learning here in the 3 days is that Waste management is a very important process for any metropolitan area. If waste is not managed we it can lead to a collapse of all other systems and eventually health catastrophes.

The Process Shirai group uses is IT savvy as all information in keyed into tablet devices and receipted after weighing for payment.

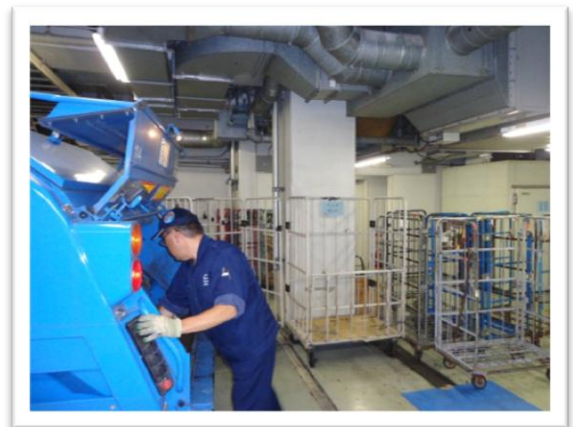
## 2. Non-Burnables



Day 2 was Non-Burnable waste from commercial buildings.

This is mostly plastics from buildings composed of packaging material from various commodities that a building has. Lunch pack, paper bags, juice bottles.

All this is taken to the center where it will be shredded, cleaned and packaged for transportation to recyclers and other buyers.



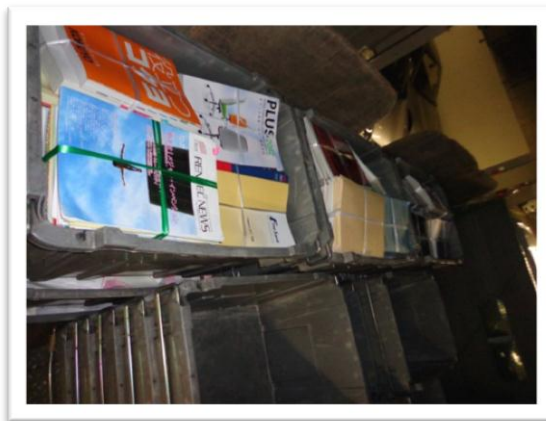
The lessons from this day are that an organised waste management sector opens many opportunities for businesses that can make use of the waste that is produced by cities. From recyclers, to energy producers, to agricultural fertilizer companies. All this is possible in Japan due to the policies and structures put in by the government.

### 3. Paper and Recyclables



Day 3 was the day for a tour with the recyclable paper waste route. The truck was different this time. It was an open truck. The main composition of the waste is newspapers, magazine, books and cardboards.

The waste as in all the other days is already sorted at the point of collection. Gain the process of collection input of data into the tablet and receipting occurs and then we drive to the point of off-loading.



The lessons from this day are based on the value of collected well managed paper waste. It is a great source of raw material for more paper and saves resources for paper. This can also greatly reduce landfill and dumpsite waste since most commercial waste is paper.

# AIESEC Development Camp

As my internship is organised through AIESEC I do my best to engage in their activities and help where I can.

In this case I attended the AIESEC Development camp meant for University students who will be going to developing countries to work as Volunteers in Development projects.

Since I have had experience in development, business and Social Business I used both academic and practical knowledge to discuss points on how development has changed in scope and how lasting Social impact can be brought about.

I was and interesting process and required me to examine a lot of statistics and found a great inspiration in Amartya Sen the Nobel Prize winner for Economics 1998 focusing on Freedoms in access to necessities and Mohamed Yunus and other focus on the emergence of Social Entrepreneurship.

I learnt how important continuous cooperation between countries. Development is an on going process even with a country like Japan which is now dealing with its own challenges as a developed county, issues such as an aging population and low birth rate, the opposite of Kenya.

## Stakeholders Meeting at TMG/CAT 23



One of the biggest parts of this internship is getting to interact and receive training in Waste Management from the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

With Mr. Chiaki Takiguchi-san we visited the offices and began the process of proposing the internship.

What I learnt at this meeting was some basics of Japanese business culture:

The courtesy meeting to introduce a person then, following up and in the process creating and maintaining a relationship. This practice is important and I see it being very relevant in any organisation.

We succeeded in getting a 3 day internship for me at the largest and Most advanced Incinerator and waste to energy facility in Japan.

I also was requested to send in a research about the Waste Management in different countries I have been to which I did.



# Elementary School Presentation



AIESEC organised for a CSR event for Shirai Group Co. where we gave a group of 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Grade students at a local elementary school in Shikahama a session on Interculturalism and having a global mindset something that is very rare in Japan.

The session was organised to have the students have as much activity while learning.

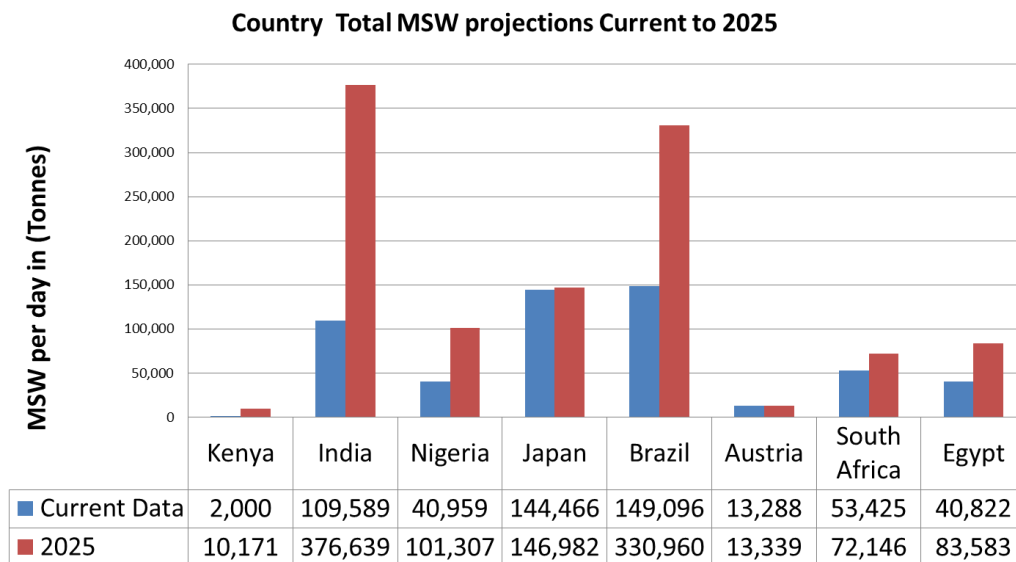
They were able to learn that different languages are spoken around the world and I also lean session in which we highlighted the situation of countries that did not have the development of Japan.



The Key things I learnt were:

- The Curiosity of children is the same all over the world.
- Getting children exposed to other cultures young helps them shift prejudice
- Only by experiencing other places can one appreciate what they have as the children began appreciating the opportunities they have being born in Japan.

# Market Research and Presentation to TMG/Tokyo23



Source: World Bank

I was honored to be asked to collect some data and give some of my findings and thoughts about Waste Management in different countries to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

This will happen in August but as I realized the custom is to hand in the presentation many weeks earlier in Japan.

I was able to finish this and send the Mr. Takiguchi-san and I delivered it to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

A lesson here in Japanese business culture is how this are done in person to establish relationships.

Instead of an impersonal e-mail we actually took a data flash drive to the office and person in charge personally.

This stuck me as a very concrete way of building relationships based in trust and respect and is a practice that needs to happen more especially in today's world of virtual communication.

# Presentation to Shirai Management Team at Monthly meeting



Shirai Groups main management team meets every month to discuss the progress of the organization. Whether sales targets are being met how the business indicators are doing and come up with strategies to improve.

There was a clear methodology of following up with data and facts and also measuring the effectiveness of the LPC 2L process that the company uses.

My learning was:

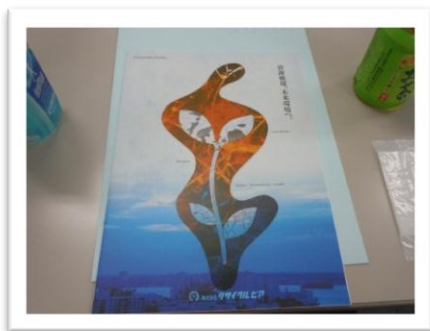
- Besides the weekly meetings and this monthly meeting it is very important to back up all the decisions and analysis with facts and data which Shirai group does and this I take as a very good example of managing a company well.
- Shirai Group Co. also has an updating meeting that is indepth every week on Tuesdays which shows that tracking and including everyone in implementing the strategy is a very important component of a successful business.

# China Team Waste Management facility Tour



As a continuation of the commitment to CSR and working with JICA to inform other countries on effective Waste Management Technologies Shirai Group Co accepted a delegation from China whom we took on a Tour of waste management facilities in Tokyo.

This is especially significant as China has the largest population in the world and is growing in incomes meaning more waste will be produced in the future.



We visited a private company that used advanced patented technology to process waste, sorting the waste with an advanced automatic process that collects the dust and reduces the number of people involved in hazardous work.

The main feature we learnt was how they combined different wastes to produce fuel solids for steel manufacturers.



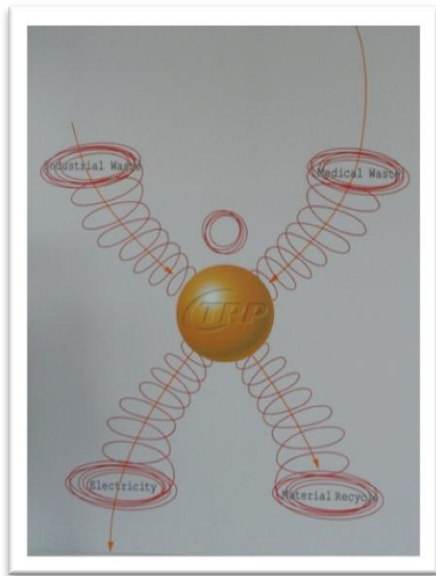
We latter visited a government facility that I an incinerator and also recycles. We say the history of waste management in Japan from the times that waste was such a problem that there was a fly epidemic to now when it is the most advanced in the world.



The picture above is testament to the technology that is used in waste management.

The physical magnetic properties of aluminum are influenced to enable them to be sorted from other metals and then packed in to these cuboid shapes for transportation to recyclers.

Science and Technology is a great investment to any country that seeks to be developed.

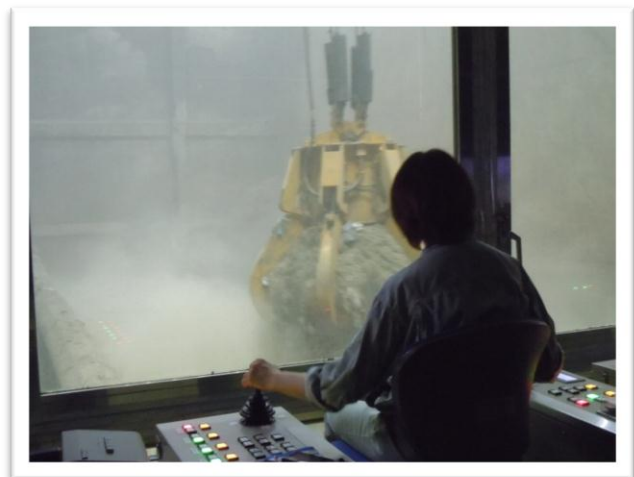


We visited the ERP Company again this time with the Chinese delegation and got a tour of the facility.

The key features we understood further are how the incinerated waste is turned in to slag which is fine enough to be used as sand for making bricks and the reclaimed metals can be used for steel works in building material

We had a better opportunity of witnessing the robotics science in play as the controller moved around the large crane arm sorting garbage in the large pit to begin the process of incineration by putting it into the furnace.

My main learning here was that there is a lot to learn from Japan for the future especially for countries that will be producing s much waste. However for smaller countries like Kenya scaled down versions of the technologies that use more labour will be most effective for the moment meaning the previous proved and tested processed that can be optimised can be used for countries like Kenya.



# Hitachi



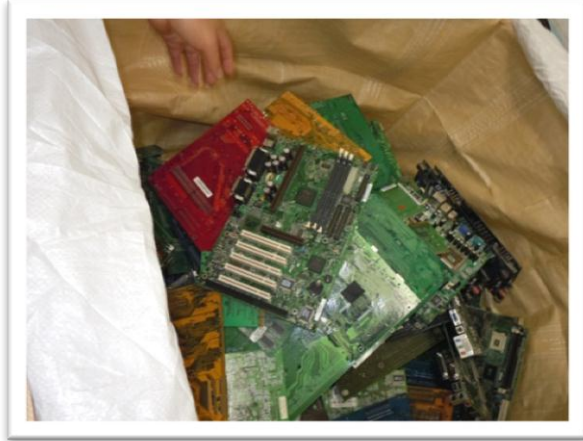
We took a tour of the Hitachi e-waste and appliances disassembly center where we were shown the way electronics in Japan are recycled.

The Japanese government policy is for two sectors A and B for recycling e-waste where different companies are given the tenders for competition.

Here we saw how different appliances such as TVs, PCs, Washing Machines and other appliances are fragmented and different parts processed. Plastics, gases in the appliances, metals and other elements.

100% of the material input is fragmented and then sold for recycling using the materials.





The e-waste is well managed with processes of destroying memory discs for security and then extracting metals and rare earths from the components. This is all done in a safe environment unlike in places such as Ivory Coast and Nigeria where e-waste has been dumped.



The learning from the Hitachi experience is again related to effective Government and incentives given to businesses to manage processes like Waste Management.

The Hitachi plant is well organized and the technology is hi-tech and automated. The resultant valuable material is used as a resource for manufacturing more goods thus ensuring the sustainable management of resources in the country and the protection of the environment by managing waste. This is a great example for the rest of the world.



# Business Meetings with Shirai Group Co



We went for a business meeting with the Cooperative association of Tokyo for Burnable Waste businesses.

I learnt about the over 200 Burnable waste cooperation works for the interests of the waste management business representing them to the Tokyo Metropolitan Government.

My Take away from here is that if there is to exist an effective and efficient business environment in Waste Management in different countries the waste Management companies need a voice. Also an effective government will manage the sector by putting the right policies like the Tokyo metropolitan government.

The model of Government and Business Cooperatives seems to increase effectiveness and efficiency by allowing all interests to be heard.



We also had a meeting with Mr. Honda-san the Building Manager for one of the building Shirai Group Co. is contracted with for Waste Management. He took us to tour the Waste Management sector of the building

My Take away was that building them need to manage and sort their waste and contract Waste Management companies. This ensures a good business environment for waste management and also helps the government manage waste better in the city.



I also attended a meeting with a client from the China Japan friendship center seeking advice on how to dispose of equipment. It was a very interesting experience on negotiation.

# Traffic Safety Conference for Shirai Group Co.



I had the opportunity this week of attending a Traffic safety seminar organized for Shirai Group co. staff especially the Truck Drivers who are key to the core business of Waste Management.

This was organized in conjunction with the Police Department who did the training using Videos and examples.

It was important to not the Internal CSR that Shirai Group Co. does to ensure workplace safety. This is an important part of business.

At the event there was also an award ceremony for the drivers who excelled in the safety record showing how incentives can be used to promote safety.

## Conclusion:

I have learnt so much in the 1 month 2 weeks I have been at Shirai Group already and I am looking forward to more.

It has opened my eyes to the importance of Urban Planning and Design and has given me a way to apply the knowledge of economics in a more practical way once I advance it with a Masters in an area such as Social Systems Engineering.