

Nanairo Ekiden

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Background

The *Nanairo Ekiden* has been held in Tsukuba Japan, Machakos, Kenya and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil since February 2016. The aim of the *Nanairo Ekiden* is to use a traditional Japanese sport “Ekiden”, to promote Olympic and Paralympic values (Excellence, Friendship, Respect, Inspiration, Courage, Determination, Equality). The programme has been planned so that participants enjoy sport alongside people with different abilities and learn about the Olympic and Paralympic values. The programme has been created specifically so that students involved in it can organise, learn and obtain practical experience.

Introduction

The *Nanairo Ekiden* consists of two different parts. One is the Ekiden, whose style is slightly different from a traditional Ekiden and which was created for this programme. The original Ekiden is a long distance relay that has a fixed total distance and the distance is allocated to a specific number of runners who must complete a given distance. Each team has a *Tasuki* (a cloth sash) and runners have to pass the *Tasuki* to the next runner, who puts it around him/herself, to complete their section of running. The *Nanairo Ekiden*, however, does not have a total distance that teams must complete, instead, the duration is fixed and teams run as far as they can during this time. The term *Nanairo* means “seven colours ” in Japanese and represents the seven Olympic and Paralympic values. Each team is representative of each value and is given a colour; red, yellow, green, blue, purple, black or white. The seven different colour T-shirts and *Tasuki* are used for the programme in order for participants to feel emotionally connected to a given colour and value and also to make the programme itself special. Each team is made up of about ten runners including boys, girls, adults and people with different abilities. As one of the aims of the programme is inclusivity, each team is comprised of people who have never met before and who have different abilities so that the participants have the opportunity to work together

with people from different backgrounds and ability and learn the meaning of being inclusive. It is significant that all Ekiden participants join the programme under the same rules but also must have the flexibility to cope with any challenges that might occur during the programme. The other part of the *Nanairo Ekiden* comprises education activities that are developed according to local needs and conditions. Up to the present, students from the Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences, University of Tsukuba, have mainly managed and delivered the activities. Students from the Tsukuba International Academy for Sport Studies (TIAS) which belongs to the Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences, designed and delivered the Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP) which is part of their curriculum. Adapted sport activities, Anti-doping Programme and Non-violence Project (NVP, a partnering NGO) were also some of the activities implemented during the Ekiden.

<The NANAIRO EKIDEN in Tsukuba, Japan>

Date: 24 February 2016

Place: Athletic Field, University of Tsukuba

3 Amakubo, Tsukuba, Ibaraki, Japan 305-0005

Participants: 512 including top Brazilian runners from the club Pe de Vento in Petropolis, Brazil (who were in Japan to run in the Tokyo Marathon), Grade 4 and Grade 7 students from *Kasuga Gakuen*, people with disability (wheelchair runners, blind runners and hearing-impaired runners), Students from the University of Tsukuba.

EKIDEN

Time: 90 minutes

Teams: 21 teams (3 teams per 1 colour x 7 colours)

Course: 1 lap equals about 1 km

Children's race

Participants: 198

Grade 4 students from *Kasuga Gakuen*

Course: 1 lap equals about 1 km

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Education Activities

- Olympic Values Education Project
- Adapted sport activities (Blind football and Frisbee and wheelchair activity),
- Anti-Doping activity

Medals and trophies handmade by students from the School of Art and Design, University of Tsukuba, were given to the top Brazilian runners and *Kasuga Gakuen* and certificates were presented to all participants. The medals and trophy were designed based on the theme of creating an “interconnected world”. The medals which have a circular shape, are threaded with the seven colours of the rainbow and each thread represents one of the seven values. They intertwine and overlap and unite people, places and events. The trophy is the same. As many people gather for the Ekiden, the trophy has several layers of connected thread, that represents a small group of connected people that spreads around the world. It is hoped that the trophy

and medal will help people to recognise the values of the *Nanairo Ekiden*.

<NANAIRO EKIDEN in Machakos, Kenya>

The *Nanairo Ekiden* was held in tandem with an event called *Elimisha Dada Race 2016*, which was supported by Sport For Tomorrow. In the local language, *Elimisha Dada* translates as “educate your sister” and the aim of this event was to empower girls through sport and provide an opportunity for them to be involved in the community to which they belong.

Date: 2 July 2016

Place: Machakos University College

P.O.BOX 136 - 90100, Machakos, Kenya

Participants: 1,269 including 8 primary schools, 2 junior high schools, 3 special needs schools, a university, 9 organisations for people with disability, 7 NGOs and JICA volunteers.



a) Children's race

b) Start of Ekiden

c) Passing a *Tasuki* from a wheelchair runner to a girl

d) Finish of a blind runner with a guide runner

Figure 1



a) Olympic Values Education Project

b) Wheelchair experience

c) Anti-Doping activity

Figure 2



a) Medals

b) Trophy

Figure 3

EKIDEN

Time: 30 minutes x 2 times

Teams: 42 teams (6 teams per 1 colour in 7 colours)

Course: 1 lap equals about 400 m

Education Activities

- Adapted sport activities (Blind Football, Sitting Volleyball, Boccia and Tug of War)

As the situation in Machakos was different from that of Tsukuba, adaptation and flexibility were considered key points in the organisation of the programme. The Ekiden was implemented twice to be able to control the large number of participants. Whilst one group was running the Ekiden, the other group undertook adapted sport activities. Demonstration and exaggeration were used as a tool to address the language barrier between local children and the students who implemented the adapted sport activities. *Tasuki*, which were used for the Ekiden in Machakos were handmade by local people with a disability and purchased and used for the purpose of inclusion and empowering them.

<NANAIRO EKIDEN in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil>

Date: 31 August 2016

Place: Vila Olímpica Professor Manoel José Gomes Tubino (Mato Alto Vila Olimpica)

Rua Candido Benício, n° 2.973, Mato Alto - Jacarepaguá

Participants: 413 including 7 junior high schools, a university, 2 organisations for people with disability, 1 athletic club

EKIDEN

Time: 30 minutes

Teams: 21 teams (1 colour: 3 teams x 7 colours)

Course: 1 lap equals about 400 m

Education Activities

- Olympic Values Education Project (OVEP)
- Adapted sport activities (Blind Football, Takkyu Volley and Sitting Volleyball)
- Non-Violence Project (NVP)

The *Nanairo Ekiden* in Rio de Janeiro was held in cooperation with the International Association of Athletic Federation (IAAF), and the Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences, University of Tsukuba. Correr Bem International Institute, an athletic club in Rio de Janeiro, provided organization and support as a local partner. The Consulate General of Japan in Rio de Janeiro, SAN-EI Corporation (Japan) and the Non-Violence Project (NVP) provided Japanese curry, material support and programme contents, which helped to create a more outstanding programme. Student volunteers were provided by Estacio Taquara University, Rio de Janeiro. The participants were divided into two groups and joined either the Ekiden or the education activities. Considering the course length and children’s ability, the time for Ekiden was set at 30 minutes in order to keep the participants concentration and excitement until the end of the programme. The education activities had three stations, including OVEP, adapted sport activities and NVP. The students planned OVEP so the participants could enjoy some physical



a) Start of the Ekiden b) Running and working together as a team c) Making a rainbow with the seven colours

Figure 4



a) Blind Football b) Sitting Volleyball c) Boccia d) Tug of War

Figure 5

activities and learn about the Olympic values. One of the sponsors, SAN-EI cooperation, an official table supplier for table tennis at the Rio Olympic and Paralympic Games, provided two tables for the programme, which were used for Takkyu Volley. Takkyu volley was invented for people of all ages and disabilities. To play the sport, people sit around a table tennis table and need to roll a ball under the net. Blind Football and Sitting Volleyball were also played and introduced to the participants during the programme. As cross cultural exchanges, local students performed street dance and capoeira. Japanese curry and rice crackers were prepared for the participants. As a participation prize, a trophy made of recycled materials,

was given to each school and a certificate was given to all the participants. The back of each certificate was printed in one of the seven different colours and the participants held these up and reversed them to create a rainbow during the closing ceremony.

The *Tree Of Nanairo* was designed and made by the School of Art and Design students, University of Tsukuba as a symble of the *Nanairo Ekiden*. The participants in the three different countries wrote their dreams, hopes or messages on the seven different coloured ribbons and tied them to the tree. With their messages and hopes, the tree will travel all around the world and be left as a legacy of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.



Figure 6



Figure 7

<Media Information>

The *Nanairo Ekiden* has been covered internationally as follows:

IAAF Website: <https://www.iaaf.org/news/news/ekiden-project-rio-2016>

AIPS Website:

<http://www.aipsmedia.com/2016/09/06/19468/rio-2016-iaaf-athletics-paralympic-games-nanairo-ekiden>

The videos of the *Nanairo Ekiden* held in Tsukuba are available at:

(English) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bNMAHo-JLo>

(Japanese) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q-XLKWrX>