

P R E S S R E L E A S E

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JAPANESE AMBASSADOR OPENS MIDLANDS YOUTH TRAINING CENTRE

At a ceremony held in Mkoba, Gweru, today, the Ambassador of Japan to Zimbabwe, His Excellency Mr Yonezo Fukuda, officially opened the Midlands Youth Training Centre. The construction of the Centre was made possible by a grant of just over \$97,000 that Japan extended to the Zimbabwe Red Cross Society. The grant was used for the construction of the Centre, the sinking of a borehole on site and equipping of classrooms with carpentry and sewing equipment.

The overall objective of the Centre is to capacitate vulnerable youth to make them self-reliant in the current difficult economic environment by providing skills in the two disciplines. Not only will the skills acquired guarantee graduates a steady source of income, but the larger community stands to benefit as well through employment creation.

It was initially projected that 120 youths would be trained per annum, but this amount will be surpassed as night classes are planned to be introduced as well. Given its strategic location in the heart of Gweru's largest high density areas, demand for places has been high.

The Centre is expected to make a significant impact on the local community and the country at large as standards of living of graduates are set to greatly improve. Speaking at the occasion, H.E. Ambassador Fukuda expressed the hope that the facilities would be fully utilized and kept in good condition.