

August 2025 Hyper Calendar Report

August marked the start of my journey with the Institute for Hyper Network Society - a month that connected Japan's technological ecosystem with Ethiopia's cultural future. While digital transformation and AI are reshaping societies globally, in Ethiopia the conversation carries a deeper urgency. Manuscripts, archives, and historical records remain vulnerable to decay, theft, or even destruction in conflict. Preserving them is not only about protecting the past but also about ensuring truth, strengthening education, and creating space for peace and new opportunities. From this pressing need, the Institute's Ethiopia project is taking shape as both a local responsibility and a global collaboration.

A highlight of this month was joining TICAD 9 in Yokohama, where I supported the Local Media Lab's booth. Introducing Ethiopia's digital archiving vision was inspiring, and the strong interest from other African delegates highlighted our shared challenges. I also attended the Ethiopia-Japan Business and Investment Forum, where I realized how cooperation extends beyond technology to enable long-term, local development. These experiences reinforced my belief in people-centered collaboration that builds trust. We progressed on the Digital Archiving project through research and key consultations with JICA. This has clarified our direction towards a proposal focused on preserving heritage and building sustainable local capacity.

At the same time, daily life in Japan has been a big part of my learning. Thanks to the team's support, my settling-in was smooth, but navigating certain bureaucratic systems presented some challenges, primarily due to language barriers and strict verification processes. I quickly realized how central systems like mobile phones, credit cards, and punctual services are to everyday life here. Opening a bank account, registering for mobile services, or applying for a credit card were not easy. For example, it took me more than a month to obtain a SIM card, and something as simple as having a middle name created complications in applications. 😊 These experiences were frustrating at times, but they also showed me how Japan balances convenience with security and trust.

Beyond the technical hurdles, I noticed how customs and habits like punctuality, quietness in public spaces shape daily life. Sometimes it was difficult to adapt, but I was also impressed by how these small practices create order and consideration in society.

For Ethiopia, these reflections reinforced the urgency of digitalization. Cultural heritage is at risk not only from poor storage but also from conflict, theft, and illicit trade. Losing these records means losing continuity and truth, which can deepen divisions. By digitizing archives and local-language books, Ethiopia can both protect its heritage and make education more accessible - laying a foundation for empowerment and peace.

Looking ahead, we will shift to implementation. I hope step by step to show how thoughtful technology use can preserve heritage, improve education, and support peace in Ethiopia.

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