

## 2018 Summer Camp Report

By Hannington Odido.

The Confucius institute Summer Camp that took place on July 15<sup>th</sup> was as informative as it was entertaining. It was a new experience for most of the students as they got to immerse themselves in a new culture and way of life without knowing what in particular they were to expect. The division of classes into language and grammar classes in the morning and history and culture classes in the afternoon provided a kind of balance for the students to see the scope of China from both the sides. It also enabled us students to put the HSK classes provided by the Confucius institute into practice, since in normal circumstances we need only study for the examinations, however, in this situation, as students we had to take a more practical approach. This also allowed us to test our limits since situations as basic as communicating with the locals require a level of understanding of the Mandarin language.

Each student came back with a more progressive way of thinking since it's common speak that you learn more of yourself looking from the outside in. A recurring revelation was Kenya's overreliance on Western influence which became apparent with how independent the Chinese people -especially when it comes to their language and media. This acted as a wakeup call for where we need to move both as a nation and as individuals, a kind of 'self-pride' needs to be brought about in the *mwananchi* since it is impossible to fully grasp and enjoy a foreign culture without first encouraging that which is yours.

The activities in the camp included intensive grammar classes and learning more *hanzi*-chinese characters, field studies to improve on communication skills and education on historical Chinese monuments, these include; the 1300-year-old Wuzhen Water Town, the Forbidden City, and the Confucius Institute Headquarters among others.

Above all else, it was a good learning experience and without a doubt each student came back more learned and better versed in the language and the histories/philosophies of China.

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