

KIMAP Internship Report / KIMAP インターンシップ報告書

No. 2026-04

I. Basic information / 基本情報

- 1) Name / 名前 : Mayombe Odubah
- 2) Enrolled year / 入学年 : 2025
- 3) Period of internship / インターン期間 : 17 August to 10 September 2026 (In-Office) & 11, 14 - 16 September (Virtually)
- 4) Place of internship / インターン場所 : Jeff Leong, Poon & Wong (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
- 5) Person who accepted your internship / インターン受入担当者 : Mr. Jeff Leong
- 6) Content of work in your internship / インターン中の作業内容:
 - Observing Cross-Border Legal Practice
 - Developing an AI Governance & Compliance Handbook for Legal Operations
 - Understanding Comparative Legal Practice
 - Conducting Due Diligence Tasks, Writing Accompanying Reports & Gaining Regulatory Exposure
 - Strengthening Legal Research Skills

II. Details and impressions / 詳細と感想

I. Reasons for Choosing JLPW Malaysia

Asia is currently Africa's largest trading partner, with legal practice playing a central role in facilitating cross-border trade and technology transfers. Yet, despite the growing depth and significance of economic relations between the two regions, as well as the similar legal and regulatory challenges they face, comparative legal scholarship examining Africa and Asia has not advanced at an equivalent pace.

It is this contradiction that motivated me to enroll in the Asian Law course offered by KIMAP as part of its Global Business Law LL.M., which ultimately led to an invitation from its co-instructor, Mr. Jeff Leong, a founding partner at Jeff Leong Poon & Wong (JLPW), to undertake a legal internship. The internship provided an opportunity to develop a practical understanding of cross-border trade and to explore how lawyers can adapt their practice and create value for clients in an era increasingly shaped by Artificial Intelligence and other disruptive technologies.

With more than 26 years of experience, offices throughout Southeast Asia, and dedicated China, Japan, Korea, Central Asia, and Russia Services, JLPW provided an ideal environment in which to develop a practical understanding of cross-border legal practice and how to create value for clients in an increasingly interconnected world. The firm also has branch offices in Penang and the Johor-Singapore SEZ, both important global export and semiconductor hubs. I was based in the firm's head office in

Kuala Lumpur City Center, which is organized into four main divisions: Corporate, Real Estate, Corporate Banking, and Litigation.

II. Personal Experience in Kuala Lumpur

The firm's central location made the commute easy, and Kuala Lumpur's taxis and buses were affordable enough that I could explore the city in my spare time — Central Market, Petaling Street, the Old General Post Office, Merdeka Square, Masjid Jamek, the Petronas Towers, and the Suria, Avenue K, TRX and Pavilion malls. I also took the opportunity to conduct a virtual visit of the Palace of Justice, home to Malaysia's Federal Court and Court of Appeal, which offered a useful point of comparison to the judicial systems I am more familiar with in Kenya and the U.K. Coming from living in Japan, it did take me a while to adapt to the heavier traffic and less predictable public transport delays. Lunches with fellow pupils and associates became an introduction to Malaysia's diverse food culture: nasi lemak with sirap ais, banana leaf rice, roti canai, Oriental Kopi's egg tarts, koay teow, and even Arabic sweets from the city's Middle Eastern eateries. Between the office and the city, the internship gave me as much of an education in Malaysia's everyday life as it did in its corporate practice.

III. The Merits & Lessons

A. Observing Cross-Border Legal Practice

Malaysia's position as a regional launch pad for startups and foreign corporations seeking to enter and expand within Southeast Asia made the Kuala Lumpur office particularly well suited to observing the practical dimensions of cross-border trade. This location and organizational structure gave me the opportunity to observe how a large, transnational legal team operates in an organized and professional manner. Each member has a clearly defined role, while different teams focus on specialized areas of practice, allowing the firm to handle complex matters efficiently and collaboratively.

B. Developing the Firm's AI Governance & Compliance Handbook

Moreover, one of the most intellectually stimulating aspects of my internship was the opportunity to participate in the formulation of the firm's Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration process. Given the relatively short duration of my internship, I spent my entire time in the Corporate Division, where I conducted research into the legal implications of law firms' use of AI tools, particularly in relation to data protection and privacy. This included examining the use of tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini in the daily operations of law firms. I also researched approaches across various jurisdictions to identify established practices and precedents, while also exploring practical measures that JLPW could adopt to mitigate the legal and regulatory risks associated with the use of AI in its operations. I subsequently consolidated my findings into an AI Governance Handbook for the firm.

C. Understanding Comparative Legal Practice

This experience was particularly valuable because it allowed me to move beyond the theoretical

discussion of AI and consider how emerging technologies interact with the practical realities of legal practice. I had numerous discussions with associates and pupils about the applicability of AI governance practices developed in other jurisdictions within the Malaysian legal system, taking into account Malaysia's particular legal history, institutional structures, and regulatory capabilities. These discussions demonstrated to me that technological regulation cannot simply be transplanted from one jurisdiction to another; rather, legal solutions must be adapted to the institutional and regulatory context in which they are implemented. This was an important lesson in comparative legal practice that I could not have gained from classroom study alone.

D. Due Diligence and Regulatory Exposure

Additionally, I was also able to assist with corporate due diligence tasks, including background checks and helping write legal due diligence reports, which exposed me to Malaysia's regulatory and corporate compliance institutions, including the Companies Commission of Malaysia (CCM), Bursa Malaysia, Malaysia Anti-Corruption Commission and relevant government departments. Having previously worked in a regulatory body in Kenya, this provided an opportunity to compare the institutional and regulatory environments of the two jurisdictions. In particular, I became interested in how Malaysia leverages its legal and regulatory infrastructure to facilitate and attract international business. Rather than viewing regulation solely as a mechanism for imposing compliance obligations, I began to appreciate its role in creating an environment in which businesses can operate with greater certainty and confidence.

E. Strengthening Legal Research Skills

Finally, the internship strengthened my practical legal research skills. I learned to navigate legal databases more effectively by using Boolean operators, proximity searching and root expanders, applying precise filters such as date restrictions and jurisdictional limits, and verifying case validity through careful headnote analysis. These skills enabled me to identify accurate, timely, and relevant legal authorities more efficiently. I expect them to be particularly valuable in my Master's research, which similarly adopts a comparative and regulatory approach to examining legal frameworks across jurisdictions.

IV. Challenges & Opportunities for Growth

Although I was originally meant to spend 20 days in Kuala Lumpur, I spent 18 days in the office and 4 days virtually while in Japan in order to satisfy the completion requirements. This was as a result of visa challenges. Additionally, due to this brief duration, I experienced two major restrictions: I had limited exposure to the full life cycle of complex transactions which are at the center of the corporate division's work and I did not receive a consistent, structured set of tasks.

While navigating the visa and travel arrangements independently was a valuable exercise in self-reliance, I would have benefited from clearer and more timely communication regarding international

logistics and internship arrangements. Although I was still able to achieve my original goals for the internship, some aspects of the pre-arrival process were unclear, making it difficult to anticipate timelines and plan my involvement effectively. Greater clarity and coordination from the outset would make it easier for prospective interns to engage more fully with the transaction process and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the work within the limited internship period.

V. Contribution to My Future Career

In conclusion, the internship changed my understanding of comparative law from the academic concepts I encountered in KIMAP courses such as Asian Law, Global and Comparative Law, Comparative Constitutional Law, and International Business Transactions into something more practical. It enabled me to see that two jurisdictions may face the same technological or commercial challenges, but that the appropriate legal response depends on each jurisdiction's history, institutions, regulatory capacity, and commercial environment.

This experience has consequently influenced how I approach my future career. I am increasingly interested in comparative regulatory research that moves beyond identifying differences between jurisdictions to examining how legal frameworks operate within their institutional and commercial contexts. In particular, my experience at JLPW demonstrated the value of examining how Asian regulatory approaches to emerging technologies and cross-border commerce might inform African legal development, while also recognizing that successful regulatory solutions must ultimately be adapted to local institutional realities.



16 September 2026