



COVID-19 in Africa  
Measures and Cooperation

In the WaQuAC-Net questionnaire survey conducted in April, many comments were given regarding the spread of COVID-19 infection in Africa and the support of international organizations. In response to those comments, we have posted following articles.

*(WaQuAC-Net Office)*

\*\*\*\* Interview \*\*\*

**UNICEF's response to COVID-19 in Ethiopia**

Ethiopia UNICEF  
WASH Coordinator

Mr. TAKAHASHI Itsuro



**Q: What are the major tasks?**

As there's a sector donor coordination in development cooperation, [the cluster approach](#) has been adopted to effectively deliver life-saving humanitarian response in emergency situation. My task as WASH cluster coordinator is to exercise 6 core functions of the cluster to create enabling environment for humanitarian partners. I am also responsible in advocating humanitarian funds provided by OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) and Technically review its projects, which total allocation is about 10 million USD.

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In Ethiopia, most people in need of humanitarian response

are those affected by drought, floods, disease outbreak and communal conflict, some of whom are internally displaced.

**Q: COVID-19 pandemic in Ethiopia**

As it is also observed in many other countries in Africa, most positive cases confirmed since March were among those who had traveled abroad or those who had a close contact with positive patients. The State of Emergency, which was activated in April, had restricted public gathering and most civil servants started WFH (Work From Home) though number of confirmed cases was not so large. One of the major challenges observed was provision of proper services at quarantine centers where people who returned back from other countries have to stay for 14 days. Since April, thousands of Ethiopian nationals had returned back to Ethiopia and several facilities are utilized as quarantine centers for them. Provision of reliable water supply, sanitation, solid waste equipment and personal protective equipment (PPE) for frontline health workers as well as those under quarantine became a major concern at different quarantine centers. Recently in June, more than 100 new cases have been reported almost every

day which means community infection is now widespread.

**Q: UNICEF's response to COVID-19**

UNICEF has been providing essential supplies and items that are required for infection prevention and control (IPC), such as equipment for water supply, handwashing stations, soaps, hand sanitizers and PPE at treatment and quarantine centers in the country as well as communities at risk. As a part of risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) measures, IEC (Information, Education and Communication) materials were also developed and distributed for community sensitization. UNICEF had also provided coordination support in both development sector and cluster as cluster lead agency (CLA).



*Water tank with tap used for washing hand  
(Photo :[ethiopia-insight.com](http://ethiopia-insight.com))*

**Q: How do you find working at UN**

It's very demanding in terms of drive for results and requires committed effort and communication skills to do a really good job. I found it very comfortable and feel that I can make use of my previous experiences while leaning more to strive. What I was impressed with is series of training on gender and harassment at workplace, which I rarely came

across in Japan. Protection of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) as well as gender-based violence (GBV) is core value of UNICEF for both in programs and at workplace. Improper WASH intervention might have a risk of SEA and GBV among vulnerable communities, especially in emergency situation which I am dealing with. I think working at UN will definitely strengthen your capacity and widen your perspectives.

**[Biography of Mr. Takahashi]**

Mr. Takahashi is UNICEF WASH Coordinator in Ethiopia since June 2018, working in Ethiopia with family for 6 years.

After completing master's degree at India and British graduate schools, he was dispatched to India as an NGO staff, worked for JICA as junior adviser in Japan, and dispatched to Zambia, Ethiopia, Jordan as JICA Expert/ JICA Project Formulation Advisor.

He also launched Fairly.fm Podcast as a voice platform for people and organizations involved in solving development and social issue

*( Interviewer : Ms. YARIUCHI Mina,  
WaQuAC-Net Office)*



**Japan Habitat Association**  
**SMILE TOILET PROJECT**  
**In KENIA**

**Mr. SHINOHARA Daisaku**



Dear members of WaQuAC-Net, how are you under the pandemic of COVID-19? I hope all of you still fine even though your activities are badly affected by the pandemic.

Japan Habitat Association (JHA), for which I work, has been implementing the project of sanitary environment improvement “Smile Toilet Project” in Kenya. A sanitary toilet is “a special medicine for urbanization” and can reduce poverty, raise human health, provide opportunities of education and equalize genders. With this concept, JHA proceeds improved latrines in Kabondo, Homa Bay County, western Kenya. Spread of improved latrines is also available to reduce water pollution of rivers and ponds by outdoor excretion.



**Water pollution by outdoor excretion**



**Latrine built by residents**

In this project, people build latrines in their houses by themselves in accordance with the policy of JHA. JHA has conducted workshops to raise consciousness of sanitation and provided technical guidance on construction of improved latrines and hand washing facilities. JHA also has instructions of farming skills to increase income of poor households so that people can bear the cost of building latrines by themselves.

And we introduced a microfinance method to decrease people’s burden for certain developments.

1,331 households of 10 villages were targets of this project

in JFY 2019. 697 households, about 60%, had latrines before the project implemented. 339 households got latrines built by February 2020. Then coverage of latrine was reached to 79%. It is expected that all household will have their own latrines by August 2020.

Lavatory Pan was recommended to install plastic one “SATO Pan” developed by Lixil company in Japan. It can flush with less than 1L of water and is useful poverty area where is no water supply system or sewerage system.

Pandemic of COVID-19 threaten the society of Kenya under its vulnerable medical condition. Hygienic latrines and hand washing facilities are effective in preventing spread of infection. Now JHA is expanding the target area of the project to increase the penetration rate of improved latrine and tippy tap with soap, by the request of the department of health of Homa Bay County. And JHA provides masks for staff members of local partner organization, health department and local volunteers and familiarize social distancing as ways of preventing infection. JHA is going to protect people’s lives and living in Kenya to reduce the risk of infectious diseases by improving sanitation and hygiene.



**Agricultural guidance by experts**



**Cooperation with Department of Health**



**Long distance of my Family,  
caused by COVID-19**

Kitakyushu City Water and Sewer Bureau  
Mr. HIROWATARI Hiroshi



At the end of June 2018, total 5 members of my family came back to Japan with happy fright, since the JICA Project for Capacity Building on Urban Water Supply in Cambodia (Phase 3) was completed. However, my elder daughter and son (16y.o and 14y.o on that time) were eager to continue to study in international school in Phnom Penh to improve their skills under English language, as they said. So, I decided my children went back to Phnom Penh with my wife. Of course, I felt sad and unease of my mind, but they left me alone from August 2018. Fortunately, I could meet them again and spend family time in Phnom Penh, since I assigned and have had business trip to Cambodia as representative on water supply sector in Cambodia. And also, I made my family tentative return to Japan in summer 2019. My family went back to Cambodia in the end of July 2019 and left me alone again. One day in early September 2019, the word my wife said that "I am pregnant" shot my hart strongly with happiness. I was so surprised and happy at that moment, and the word brought me to real world which I would have to take care of 5 members of my family.

After the event of happiness, I worked hard for several projects such as the Siem Reap Water Supply Expansion Project as a supervisor of pipe network, the Invitation project for Senior Minister and Minister of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation, H.E. CHAM Prasidh in

November 2019, the Seminar for Cambodia-Japan Water Supply and Sewer in January 2020, and etc,. I had to move week by week for such kind of the work between Japan and Cambodia, and also Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. I absolutely enjoyed working since It was my honor and pleasure work that I wanted.

I left my main work from December 2019 to January 2020, since the invisible stress had been accumulated and casted a bad effect to my body. After resting, I came back completely to main work, but the new challenges started to cover the world silently. It was COVID-19. The standard for staff dispatching to overseas in my bureau is less than level 2 on "Travel Warning" (we had 1 warning at that time) by Ministry of Foreign Affair in Japan (Reference; Level 4 is evacuation advice), and we have to make dispatched staff go back to Japan if the level raised. At the beginning of March 2020, the level was 1. So, I planned my business trip to Cambodia from April. On the other hand, I simply thought that I might meet my wife because her planned giving birth date was 1<sup>st</sup> of April. Actually, I went to Cambodia from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of March privately to meet my family, and I decided to bring back my elder daughter and son to Japan from 20<sup>th</sup> March, since I got the information of school class suspension and starting remote class. However, my planning for business trip in April went to blank since the Ministry of Foreign Affair raised the Travel Warning to level 2 on 25<sup>th</sup>



**Hirowatari Family**



**Impact of my life  
during COVID-19**

**PPWSA (Cambodia)  
Mr. CHENDA Pharith**



Covid-19 had entered in the world during the end of 2019. First pandemic occurred in Wuhan, China and started spreading very quickly to entire planet. In the same way, Japan also suffered from the virus infection due to a global pandemic. It was serious and the high peak of Japan was during April, 2020.

Japanese government has decided to put the entire country in a state of emergency, and requested Japanese citizen to stay home, reduce business hours, employ working from home, start online class and suspend their business during the state of emergency. In respond to the declaration of emergency, Prime Minister Abe has decided a supplementary budget of the package around 200 trillion yen; equivalent to 40% of the country GDP, to fund an array of financial incentives such as unemployment supports and rescue plan for small business under the name of economic recovery.

Let's talk about my life during this difficult time. It is definitely affecting the daily life not only on me but also on every citizen living in the countries where the Covid-19 cases confirmed.

Almost 90 percent of people's time is at home. It is boring and stressful to stay home most of day and night. Based on my experience, I can go out once every three days for buying foods and other daily necessities. The most important thing is I need to wear mask all the time for preventing infection of the virus because I don't know who

has the virus. More importantly, I am living in Chiba where is severe prefecture. Therefore, I need to be careful in highest level.

Looking at my academic life, I am currently a student in the second semester of the first year of Toyo University graduate school.

During this difficult situation, the university has decided to start online classes. Therefore, I have to study by online, which is hard and totally different from real classroom. Sometimes, it is interrupted caused by connection problem or not enough GB for internet. Honestly, I think E-learning is not suitable and feel uncomfortable.

Since I have been at home for a long time, I really miss my family living overseas. So, I make video call with them during nighttime before going to bed almost every day. It is really comfortable for them because Japan time is 2 hours earlier than Cambodia time.

Fortunately, Cambodia had only 122 confirmed cases of the virus infection with no fatalities as of June 5, 2020. However, I still recommend my family members to live carefully in this hard situation.

Last but not least, I wish Covid-19 will disappear from the world soon by developing a vaccine to cure, and prevent it from the pandemic again.

I want to send my best regards to WaQuAC-NET staff and all members, and I hope that we could live safely in this global pandemic.



My Experience of Kanagawa Overseas Technical Training

MWA(Thailand)

Ms. Weesuda CHALOEYTH



Hi! everyone. My name is Bee, a scientist from Metropolitan Waterworks Authority (MWA) in Thailand. I received a scholarship from Kanagawa local government for “The 2019 Kanagawa Prefectural Government Program for Overseas Technical Trainees”. I was really excited because this 6-month long training was my first visiting Japan.

**About training program**

For the first month and a half, I learned Japanese language from an instructor of the Japan Overseas Cooperative Association (JOCA). After



**Practicing Japanese calligraphy**

I spent most of the time in the laboratory for analyzing microplastics particles using by Fourier Transform Infrared (FT-IR) Spectrophotometer. I also took several trips for studying water quality management at the Nishiya Purification Plant in Yokohama City Waterworks Bureau, Kanagawa Water Supply Authority (KWSA) and the Asaka Water Purification Plant in Tokyo Metropolitan Waterworks Bureau. I observed the membrane filter which was made of ceramic, and robust and chemical resistant. It was interesting for me,

that, I started technical training on environment at Kanto Gakuin University under the supervision of Dr. Motoyuki Kamata.



**Labo in Yokohama WWB**

because MWA didn't have this technique yet. I also investigated water at Lake Sagami and conducted Jar test at the Meta-water laboratory. And I reported test result. As part of the program, I participated in the Water Research Conferences organized by JWWA, and a seminar about microplastics held by the Japan Society on Water Environment (JSWE). I studied that several Japanese waterworks bureaus received claims about smell from water during summer in Japan, The smell might be caused by organic substance (Geosmine and 2-methylisoborneol (2-MIB)), which can be removed by using Powder Activated Carbon (PAC). Lastly, I went to observe the pipe cleaning process by Aquapig Ball at Nakazato Construction Company. The process started from putting a soft Aquapig Ball inside pipe. And by applying pressure to the ball, it was able to flow inside pipe. Then It swept dirt like rust or sediments inside pipe. This is an interesting technology and I think MWA should employ it as well.

**About activities**

Throughout the training period, I also participated in activities on Saturday, Sunday and national holiday. These were cultural exchanges with residents in Ebina for cooking Japanese food and making Japanese papercraft, cultural trips to shrines and temples in Kyoto Kamakura, Enoshima, Kawasaki and Ofuna, and Sports day with





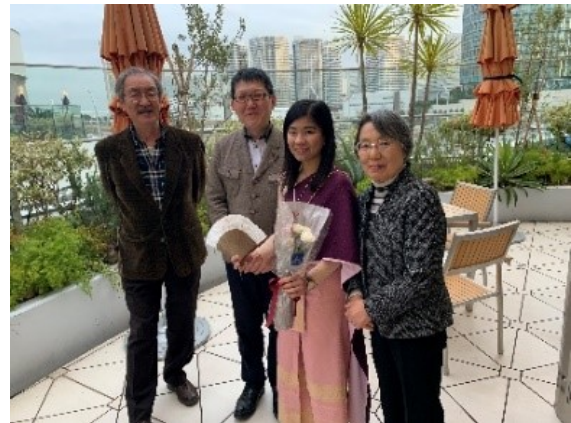
Japanese children and Para-sport (boccia and rolling Volleyball) with disabled people. I also had an opportunity to take a video introducing Kanagawa prefecture. Lastly, I spent my free time to travel around interesting sightseeing spots in Tokyo, Chiba and Yokohama.



*Commemorative photo of the training completion ceremony*

**Impressions**

Apart from technical aspects where I learned about water quality management, and water analysis, I also learned how to adapt myself to Japanese culture as the training duration was quite long. Especially in transportation, I had to catch a train instead of driving myself, so I needed to manage myself to be on time with everything. In my opinion, Japanese people also give importance to time management. Finally, I got a lot of international friends as many foreigners resided in the dormitory where I stay.



*WaQuAC-Net farewell party*

**Special thanks**

My supervisors, Mrs. Siwilai Kitpitak and Miss Chaweeapan Suangkiattikun, who gave me the great opportunity to apply for this training program. And I would like to thank Dr. Motoyuki Kamata from Kanto Gakuin University, Japan Overseas Cooperative Association (JOCA), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), JECK International Cooperation Experts' Consulting, Water Quality Asian Cooperation Network (WaQuAC-Net), Yokohama Waterwork, Kanagawa Water Supply Authority (KWSA), METAWATER and Kanagawa Prefectural Government (K.P.G.), who support me during the 6-month in Japan. I will keep in touch, remember and I promise I will come back again.

\*On March 9, 2020, the ceremony of the training completion and the trainees' presentations were held at the Kanagawa Prefectural Office. The number of participants was limited due to the impact of COVID-19. After that, WaQuAC-Net farewell party for Ms. Bee was held with Doctor Kamata, Mr. Sasayama and Yamamoto (Ms. Yamamoto, WaQuAC-Net Office)

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\*Most articles were written in June, so the COVID-19-related situations in some articles may be changing now.

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**Next Activity**

September 15 Newsletter vol.46 in Japanese  
October 15 Newsletter vol.46 in English