



**Grassroots Activity Report
(Sapporo City / Nepal)**
Taeko Miyashita
(JENTEC CO., LTD.)

The beginning of technical cooperation

I am currently participating as an advisor in a JICA grassroots project, "Technical cooperation project for systematization of water supply and distribution management in Pokhara City, Nepal," which is being implemented by the Sapporo Waterworks.



The opportunity to start this technical cooperation in Nepal came when Mr. Takashi Saiki, a member of WaQuAC-net and he was a Water Supply Adviser in Nepal, visited Sapporo and introduced us about the current situation of water supply in Nepal. This was just when Sapporo Waterworks had finished grassroots technical cooperation in Mongolia and was considering whether to implement it again in Mongolia or in another country. Thanks to Mr. Saiki, the momentum of "Let's do Nepal next!" was instantly raised.

Training started online

The project started in February 2022, but unfortunately due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the training had to start online at first.

Participants watched the materials we created on YouTube and questions and answers were conducted via Zoom.

The first face-to-face training was finally held in August last year in Sapporo. Dr. Ishwar Prasad, the General Manager of Nepal Water Supply Corporation (NWSC), and six participants visited Sapporo. It was a sweaty training in the heat of Sapporo's highest temperature record.

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Water tanks on the roofs of houses

My first visit to Nepal

In February of this year, I attended the first Nepal training and visited Nepal for the first time. When I arrived at the Pokhara branch, I felt happy. Because I saw that NWSC's staffs had built a training yard for leak detection on the premises by themselves, utilizing the knowledge acquired from the Sapporo training, and that a person in charge of water quality analysis, who had not been there until then, had been assigned there.

During the Nepal training, I gave a lecture on "Water quality management in water distribution systems," and talked about water quality problems that occur in water distribution systems, monitoring items, monitoring points, how to respond to abnormal water quality, and how to respond to users' water quality complaints. Finally, I asked, "What kind of water quality complaints do you receive?" Upon which everyone answered unanimously, "Water no running!" (Even though I asked them about water quality complaints...)

After witnessing the reality of intermittent water supply and the massive amount of water leakage in Pokhara, I realized that it was no surprise that people were complaining about no

water. As water is only supplied intermittently for a few hours a day, each household has a water tank to store as much water as possible during water running time. When the water supply starts in the morning, water gushes out into the gutters around the houses. Terrible water leakage! When the water supply stops, the phenomenon stops immediately. This means that unless the water supply stops at night when water usage is low, water will just leak out. It seems that they cannot stop the intermittent water supply.

With old friends

The day before returning from Nepal, I had the opportunity to meet old friends in Kathmandu. They were Mr. Sanjeev Bickram Rana and Mr. Rabindra Pokhrel.

Mr. Rana is currently Executive Director of the Kathmandu Valley Water Supply Management Board (KVWSMB). Mr. Rabindra is Deputy Project Director in Project Implementation Directorate (PID) under Kathmandu Upatyaka Khanepani Limited (KUKL). As you all know, he is a member of WaQuAC-Net. Both of them participated in JICA “Water Supply Engineering training course” conducted by Sapporo Waterworks, Mr. Lana in 2002 and Mr. Rabindra in 2019. I have maintained a friendship with them ever since.

Mr. Ozaki, the member of WaQuAC-Net and was assigned to the Ministry of Water Supply of Nepal as a JICA Expert, also joined us.

We had a fun meal at Mr. Rana's favorite restaurant where ethnic dance show is performed.



Enjoy a fun meal with old friends

Thoughts on the future

The closing session will be held in Nepal this December, and this project will come to an end for the time being. Having seen the enormous amount of water leakage, I hope that the project will continue.

Sapporo Waterworks has already drawn up a long-term water pipeline rehabilitation plan for the next 80 years. Therefore, I wish that Sapporo City will not only transfer the technology for leak detection and pipe repair, but also support in formulating a long-term pipeline renewal plan for Nepal utilizing its know-how.

Report on the Kanagawa Prefecture
Overseas Technical Trainee
~MWA in Thailand~

The following self-introduction email was received from **Ms. Palsiri Srirungruanga**. She is a participant of the Kanagawa Prefecture Overseas Technical Training Programme in 2024. She came from the Metropolitan Waterworks Authority of Thailand

Thank you for your kindness and I am looking forward to seeing you. Now I am studying Japanese language at my dorm. It is a quite new challenge for me. I will do my best. My information you require is following:



Ms, Palsiri

Full name: Ms Palsiri Srirungruang
Expectation of Japanese life: Great Japanese Cultural Values including Politeness, Formality, Respect and Conformity. Good manners of Japanese people are interesting that I wish to be. Not only water sector's knowledge and modern technology regarding to my job, but also our relationship will be developed further.

Reporter's note

After arriving in Japan in mid-September, she will learn Japanese first, then from October to mid-February next year, she will study water quality testing and water quality management, including site visits, at Kanto Gakuin University, Kanagawa Prefectural Waterworks and Yokohama City Waterworks Bureau, before returning home in early March.

The Member Self-Introduction

Kazunori NAKAI
(Marubeni Corp)

Past career

I was born and raised in Kobe, and joined a general contractor after graduating from graduate school. I was assigned to a mountainous tunnel site in Aichi Prefecture, digging mountains daily. Later, I joined the City of Yokohama, experiencing the sewerage department and water works bureau. During my tenure at the water works bureau, I was seconded to JICA headquarters for 3 years, where I engaged in yen loans, grants, and technical cooperation projects. I am currently working in the water business at the Environmental Infrastructure Project Department of Marubeni Corporation.



@Madhya Pradesh, India
Site visit

Ah... I want to help develop infrastructure in developing countries." Connecting the dots."

I love visiting new places, and when I was a university student, I traveled abroad a lot. When I went to developing countries, I faced situations where I couldn't use water, electricity, or toilets. It reminded me of the Great Hanshin Earthquake I experienced as a child. I was shocked to realize, "What's considered an emergency situation after a disaster in Japan is everyday life in this country..." This experience led me to want to be involved in infrastructure development in developing countries.

I entered the Department of Construction, which was not my original choice at the time, but it ended up being connected to what I wanted to do. This reminds me of a quote from Apple co-founder Steve Jobs' speech at Stanford University: "You can't connect the dots looking forward. You can only connect them looking backwards, so you have to trust that the dots will somehow connect in your future."

The appointment order came suddenly. "Oh? Waterworks Bureau?" "Oh! JICA?"

In Yokohama City, I received a transfer order from the sewerage department to the water works bureau.

"Water works bureau?" I was honestly confused, but through practical work, I gradually realized that water supply is the most basic infrastructure that needs to be developed in



@Kingston, Jamaica
Leak survey site

developing countries. I found the difficulty of water supply, which can become dysfunctional if not continuously operated and maintained from the water source to the tap, as well as the rewarding aspects of the job of water supply.

I received an order to be seconded to JICA. I was to be involved in infrastructure development in developing countries. It was a moment when the dots connected again. At JICA, I was assigned to handle grant aid projects, technical cooperation projects, and yen loans. Until then, I had only been looking at the technical aspects of water supply, but this became an opportunity to gain a perspective on water utility management. I realized that engineers should not be fixated on technology for their own satisfaction, but should consider how that technology can improve water utility management and which parts of the financial statements it will affect.

Breaking new ground

Since 2022, I've been working in the water business at Marubeni Corporation's Environmental Infrastructure Projects Department.

The Marubeni Group supplies water to approximately 15 million people through its water supply and sewerage concession business. Using the experience gained at the Yokohama Water Works Bureau and JICA, I hope to contribute to the water supply business on the private side in the future.



Technical Exchange Meeting between Sendai City Waterworks Bureau and Marubeni Group

To everyone at WaQuAC-Net,

My children were young, so I wasn't able to participate much in activities until now. But as they're becoming a bit more independent, I think I'll be able to gradually participate more from now on. There are experienced people with different areas of expertise here, so I'd like to learn various things from you. Thank you in advance!

Memorable Encounters with CPs in Fiji

~ Mr. Jonacani Ravouvou and Mr. Tomasi Tuinmoala (WAF) ~

Hiroto ODA

Introduction

After retiring from Fukuoka City Waterworks, I worked as a JICA Senior Overseas Volunteer in Fiji for two years from 2010, carrying out technical cooperation activities for stable water supply and leakage control in Fiji. I would like to introduce some of the local counterparts (CPs) I met through this experience.



Meet Mr Joe and Examples of Our Activities (First Year in Post)

After arriving in Fiji, I was assigned to Lautoka after training in the capital, Suva. I was put in charge of the Nadi and Lautoka area, where I met Mr Joe, the project leader for the area's water leakage reduction project. A big man typical of Fijians, he has an intimidating presence but a gentle heart. He immediately took me to his office, where he explained the ongoing project. Without an overall diagram, I didn't fully grasp



Mr. Oka and Mr. Joe at the time

it at first. That afternoon, Mr. Joe guided us to the site where the water pipes were being laid.

The following day, Mr. Joe led us on an intensive tour of the Nadi-Lautoka area water supply system, from the source to the tap water supply. Since he was familiar with the water supply system in this area, I quickly understood the whole system.

Eventually, Mr. Joe started consulting me about on-site problems. When I couldn't understand his explanations, I decided to head straight to the site. Both Mr. Joe and I preferred to be hands-on. For example, to answer the question, "In a two-storey flat, is the water pressure twice as high as on the ground floor?" we immediately went to the site to check the water pressure, finding it exactly the same. We suspected there might be two distribution pipes with different pressures laid in the road. The next day, after excavating the road, we discovered two distribution pipes: one from an old lowland reservoir and another from a newly elevated reservoir. The old pipes hadn't been discarded, and the water supply to the ground floor hadn't been switched over.

I also worked with Mr. Joe to resolve other long-standing water supply problems in the area. He reported my activities to other staff and his boss, increasing confidence in JICA Senior Volunteers.

Meet Mr Tom and Examples of Our Activities (Second Year in Post)

In my second year, Mr Tom was appointed as the new CP.

After one year in post, I was appointed to the Water Authority in Fiji's Headquarters

Under Mr Tom's pre-appointment, I travelled to the Eastern and Central Offices and the Northern Office to make recommendations to the respective recommendations were made to the area heads. I also visited damaged sites with Mr Tom during the two torrential rains in early 2012 and made recommendations on early recovery measures.

Based on my experience of emergency temporary abstraction of groundwater and small river water during the 1978 drought in Fukuoka City, I proposed the emergency temporary abstraction of water from a small river in the Ba area, a town next to Lautoka. This alleviated a long-term water shortage, greatly impacting residents, WAF officials, and staff.

Thanks to Mr. Tom's prior negotiations, we also gave a presentation at a primary school in Lautoka to raise children's awareness about water supply.



Mr Tom with His Grandchildren at the time

Throughout the two-year activity, I gained a fulfilling experience supported by wonderful CPs. After returning to Japan, this activity led to the implementation of the JICA Grassroots Technical Cooperation Programme between Fukuoka City and WAF. I was able to meet the CPs again during their visits to Fukuoka City and Fiji, and I met Mr. Tom again during training in Japan.



From left Mr Tom and Mr Joe now.

Mr Tom's message to Oda-san:

Bula vinaka Mr ODA san., greetings from Tom Lai and the family from Fiji. Hope all is well with you and your family in Fukuoka, for us here in Fiji we all ok and my wife sends her regards, including Matelita my daughter and my 2 grandsons Tommy and Ezra who are both in year 8 currently which you already met in Fiji.

For WAF we still have the 2 pump sites at Buabua and Varage which you picked during rainy season, which has helped WAF very much. We have already had both pump sites with water main pipes already at the site, just left for the pump only to be dropped at the site when needed.

We'll still following your moto of repairs to be done before it gets bigger.

Anyway, Mr ODA san have a Blessed day and God Bless.

Vinaka.



Mr Tom 's Grandchildren now

Editor's Note

Oda-san reported on our activities in Newsletter [Vol. 20](#).

We would like to thank Oda-san for his kind cooperation and contribution to this new project. He has also kindly agreed to contribute to this new project even as his CPs are retiring.

Report on the 17th WaQuAC-NET Webinar

Japan's Waterworks Bureau Experts Discuss Career Paths and the Potential for International Cooperation

Tomohiro MINAMI

The webinar was held for Japanese WaQuAC-Net members, Japan's waterworks members, and those interested in future international cooperation. Participants discussed the experiences and career paths of experts. The panelists included former JICA experts and aimed to provide hints for future international cooperation and career paths. The summary is as follows:

Date and Time: September 8, 2024, 20:00-21:30

Format: Zoom meeting

Panelists:

Hiroshi Hirowatari, Kitakyushu City Water and Sewer Bureau.

Noboru Ozaki, former Nepal JICA expert/former Sakai City.

Takashi Saiki, Fiji JICA expert/former Matsuyama City.

Audience:

Sapporo City: Akita, Seto, Endo.

Saitama City: Sonoda, Sekine, Ichikawa.

Kyoto City: Yokoyama.

Osaka Prefecture: Okada.

Kitakyushu City: Sasada, Tanaka.

Fukuoka City: Kubota.

Kagoshima City: Tomisako.

WaQuAC-Net Members:

Fujitani, Nagashio, Miyashita.

Executive Office: Yamamoto, Yariuchi.

Facilitators:

Minami (Tanzania JICA expert/former Kagoshima City).

Takegawa (Yokohama City).

Main Contents:

Future Contributions of Japanese Waterworks to International Cooperation:

- Engage in technology transfer, utilizing experience in facility construction design support and daily operation and maintenance management for water supply systems.
- Utilize accumulated knowledge to work on solving problems in each country and sector.
- Despite the outsourcing situation in Japan, experience and insight in daily business management will be an advantage in international cooperation.

Identifying and Addressing Issues in International Cooperation:

- Build trusting relationships with counterparts and provide face-to-face support and advice.
- Understand the counterpart's situation (history and background) and address their issues.

Changes Before and After Related Training:

- Experience gained from attending lectures with overseas trainees and connections with other members.
- Noticed a change in the way colleagues viewed me after taking the course because no one around me was involved in international cooperation.

Advice for Persons Aiming to Work in International Cooperation:

- Continue to communicate your intentions.
- Prepare to gain a wide range of knowledge.
- Consult with experienced experts.

Preparation to Become an Expert:

- Maintain regular lifestyle habits to secure time for self-improvement.
- Create situations where you are always exposed to other languages to improve language skills.
- Build and collect personal connections to gain a wide range of knowledge and insights, not just in specialized skills.

Cultivating the Ability to See Things from a Bird's-Eye View:

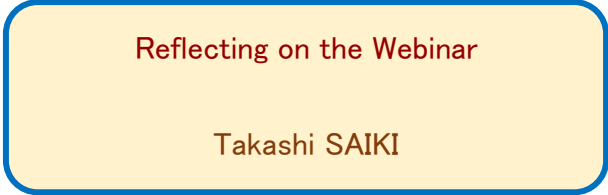
- Short-term overseas experience and participation in JICA training broadened my horizons and interest in other fields.
- Experience in planning new projects based on staffs, things, and money in the planning department gave me a mindset of accepting anything. This mindset is also useful in my current professional work.



Participants of the 16th WaQuAC-Net Webinar

The webinar was lively, with participants asking questions and panelists exchanging opinions. The event ran longer than scheduled. Comments from the participants included, "It was good to hear about how to incorporate international cooperation into my life", and "Everyone's

experiences and stories were very motivating". These comments indicate that the participants found the event valuable for hearing about how Japanese waterworks should be involved in international cooperation in the future and the career paths of the younger generation.



Firstly, on behalf of the team who organized this webinar, I would like to thank the WaQuAC-Net members, water utilities, panelists, and facilitators who participated.

Reflecting on this webinar, I've come to realize that meeting important people along the way has paved the path for me to become a JICA expert, especially when things went wrong. Encounters with members during the JICA capacity building training, WaQuAC-Net, and WaterWorks have all been significant to me.

Lastly, I would like to address the younger generation who participated in the webinar and are reading this article. I hope you think, "Hey, hey, hey, I'm the great one!" and step forward with confidence. From my experience, I can say that one step leads to another and then another.

Thank you very much.

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Next Activities
 December 2024: 2024 Year-End Party
 January 2025: Newsletter No. 62
 (Japanese Version)