

# JICA KEEN ON IMPROVING ECONOMIC GROWTH

The Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), is advancing its activities around the pillars of a field-oriented approach, human security, enhanced effectiveness, efficiency and speed. In Uganda, JICA activities focus on improving the environment to attain economic growth, raising incomes in rural areas, improving the living environment, including health services and water supply. **JOSEPH BAHINGWIRE** caught up with Uchiyama Takayuki, the JICA chief representative to Uganda and asked him about the sports they have extended to Uganda over the years

**Briefly tell us about JICA's activities in Uganda**  
JICA's development vision believes in helping people realise their development issues and addressing them in a participatory manner. JICA understands the relevance of long-term support in an ever-changing environment of developing countries and provides effective support to reduce poverty and related issues. We have, thus, been partners in Uganda on many development-related projects.

**What has been your intervention in the water and sanitation sector?**

For more than 10 years, we have collaborated with the water ministry to improve water supply in the local communities. This has been majorly through borehole development and maintenance, so that the local communities get access to clean and sustainable water supply. Recently, we embarked on a technical Cooperation with the ministry to develop Direct Management Systems (DMS).

**How will the DMS improve water sustainability in the villages?**

We are working with local governments in the rural areas to utilise new local technologies to effectively provide water to their communities, whereby the local people will be required to contribute some money so as to be able to access water supply.

This will be undertaken by a local company called SUNDA that has designed a system that allows the locals to pay through mobile money, to enable them get a token that allows them access to water.

However, this is still a pilot project in its development



Uchiyama Takayuki

stage in the central region districts, such as Mubende, Mityana and Gomba.

**How are you supporting the hand-washing day and how important is this day?**

We are not just improving water resources, but also the way of using water with the intention of promoting hygiene and sanitation. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a need to improve sanitation and promoting hand washing was the best way to achieve this.

Hand washing is the best and cheapest way to protect oneself from COVID-19. We are thus promoting this by providing water tanks to communities to help them improve sanitation through hand washing. We also supplied sanitisers to Entebbe International Airport, as well as hospitals.

**What other activities has JICA supported over the years?**

JICA endeavours to address the negative effects of globalisation, such as climate change, spread of infectious diseases, terrorism and uneven distribution of wealth. In its poverty alleviation agenda, it provides support towards enhancing employment opportunities and ensures

provision of basic services, such as healthcare and education to communities.

Since good governance is essential for addressing issues of socio-economic development, it supports governments in placing appropriate systems.

The guiding principles of JICA's mission are "achieving synergies of the merger, tackling complex, difficult issues flexibly with the field-based approach, fostering expertise for providing professional solutions and efficient and transparent operations."

The themes covered by JICA range from education, health, disaster management, governance, peace-building to social security, gender development and environmental management.

**What can you tell us about the new bridge across River Nile at Jinja?**

In November 2010, JICA signed a loan agreement with the Government of Uganda for up to JPY 9.198b (approx.\$100m) for this project. A new cable-stay bridge along with access roads was built across the Nile River and this is expected to encourage

**FOR MORE THAN 10 YEARS, WE HAVE COLLABORATED WITH THE WATER MINISTRY TO IMPROVE WATER SUPPLY IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES. THIS HAS BEEN MAJORLY THROUGH BOREHOLE DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE.**

economic activities not only in Uganda, but also in neighbouring countries, promoting regional integration and it has worked as a symbol for Uganda.

**What was your role in upgrading of Atiak-Nimule road?**

In March 2010, JICA signed a loan agreement with the Government of Uganda for up to JPY 3.395b (about \$40.9m) for this project.

Through the project, transport capacity of the area has been dramatically strengthened by improving the road condition up to the border with South Sudan. It will also contribute to promoting economic activities between Uganda and South Sudan.

**Take us through the Kampala flyover construction and road upgrading project**

In October 2012, at the request of the Government of Uganda, JICA committed to conducting a feasibility study, including Preliminary Design of the Project that commenced in March 2013.

The study focuses on the construction of flyovers at Kitugum House and Clock Tower junctions, as well as widening of the Mukwano Road and traffic safety improvements at Shoprite and Clock Tower areas as necessary projects for improvement of transportation in the greater Kampala Metropolitan Area.

**Update us on the Bujagali interconnection project**

This project establishes high voltage transmission facilities, including required substations necessary for the evacuation of power from the recently constructed Bujagali Hydro Power Station to the national power grid.

The project provides the necessary infrastructure for supply of reliable electric

power that will facilitate social and economic development of the country.

**Tell us about the interconnection of Electric Grids of Nile Equatorial Lake countries**

In March 2010, JICA signed a loan agreement for up to JPY 5.406b (about \$55m) to finance the interconnection of power grids between Uganda-Kenya (220KV, 127km) and Uganda-Rwanda (220KV, 66km), including upgrading of sub-stations, which is a part of NELSAP (Nile Equatorial Lakes Subsidiary Action Programme) that promotes regional power trade among Nile Equatorial Lakes Countries.

**Give us an insight into the rural electrification projects**

JICA has implemented a Grant Aid project that is now in its third phase. The project aims at extending the distribution system for reliable and stable supply of electricity to the rural communities within the project sites. The project involves the supply and installation of 33KV distribution lines and distribution transformers (33kv/415-230V). Total length of distribution lines, until the third phase is more than 500km.

**What do we need to know about the coalition for African Rice Development (CARD) initiative?**

JICA, in partnership with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), launched an initiative on the occasion of 4th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) in 2008 to support efforts of African countries to double rice production from 14 million MT to 28 million MT by 2018. Under the framework of CARD, JICA supported the formulation of the National Rice Development Strategy (NRDS) and is currently

## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The media has been awash with stories of a partnership between JICA and SOLTILO Bright Stars. What is it all about?

I would like to add that JICA has been working in the field of international co-operation and we believe that sport has a powerful impact on development. Thus, we are promoting 'Sports for All' agenda by supporting various sports developments in the country, for instance through collaboration with the Uganda Olympic Committee. The most recent development is the signing of an official partnership agreement with SOLTILO Bright Stars FC, a professional soccer club in the Uganda Premier League. We believe that this partnership will promote international co-operation through sports and also create a mutual ground for achieving the SDGs.

supporting efforts by the Government of Uganda to formulate a Roadmap for Rice Seed Value Chain Development in Uganda.

**What kind of support are you extending to the rice sub-sector, through the Promotion of Rice Development Project (PRiDe)?**

Considering successive outcomes from past rice projects, Japan has been implementing the PRiDe project since November 2011 in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, and its associated agencies - National Agricultural Advisory Services and National Agricultural Research Organisation. The project targeting 40,000 farmers, PRiDe aims at increasing rice production by 20,000 tonnes, through building capacity for rice related researchers, institutions, extension service providers and farmers, for improved rice quality in the market. The project covers three agro-ecological environments: rain-fed upland, rain-fed lowland, and irrigated lowland; and it also focuses on mechanisation and rice value chain development. It is expected to contribute to increased national rice production by 10%.



## JICA SUPPORTS MINISTRY OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENT IN WASH ACTIVITIES

The people of Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) have since last year been contributing to the fight against COVID-19 in Uganda, by engaging in activities that ensure provision of safe and clean water.

The water has always not only been for household needs but also to enforce hand washing as part of the Standard operation Procedures (SoPs) in the mitigation of the pandemic.

According to the Ministry of Water and Environment, this came with challenges such as increased numbers of users and congestion at communal water points or sources, increased rate of breakdowns for communal water sources and extreme fear among the local population on self-management to avoid infections while in public places.



Residents of Kiswera in Myanzi Sub-County pumping water at one of the boreholes. This is the commonest source of water for communities in the target districts.

The people of Japan however, through JICA offered support to the Water and Environment sector to alleviate and mitigate these challenges. A generous amount was dedicated for this purpose.

According to Paul Bisoborwa, the Deputy Project Manager in the Ministry of Water and Environment, the funds are being used in eight districts: Mityana, Kassanda, Mubende, Gomba, Butambala, Kyankwanzi, Mpigi and Kiboga, to ensure sustainable water supply.

In most of the communities, boreholes are the main source of water. Bisoborwa says part of the funds were meant for provision of spare parts for repairing over 345 community boreholes, and for provision of equipment for improved management and supporting monitoring of point water sources.

Additionally, JICA supported the ministry through provision of five hundred and fourteen (514) hand washing facilities, over one thousand units of liquid soap, water purification units, and provision of information and communication materials to raise awareness among local people and others and remind them of the SoPs.



An Officer at Kassanda Sub-county Local Government using a water purifier donated by JICA.



A lady washing her hands using a water facility donated by JICA. These facilities have been placed in most public places in the target districts.

Currently, the ministry, with JICA's support is running an Operational and Management project for rural water supply facilities especially on boreholes in the districts.

Through this, the Direct Management System (DMS) model was developed to minimize breakdowns and improve response time for already existing communal point water sources.

"The DMS model has proved to us that its reliable and effective in management of community point water sources as residents can have water supplied all the time, and spending very little time when a source has broken down," Keefa Mutesasira, the Mubende district Water Officer noted.

### HOW IT WORKS

A few months ago, JICA organized a training for hand pump mechanics, with representatives from each Sub-county in the target districts. These

were equipped with skills on how to manage some common mechanical faults in the boreholes. Together with the district leadership, a caretaker was appointed on each borehole to monitor and manage its operations.

The caretakers register the number of households per water source and each household pays Shs. 2000 for a month.

In other communities, an automated payment system called 'SUNDA' is used, where residents pay any amount using mobile money. This tremendously reduces costs on water.

Solution SUNDA



'SUNDA' was born by an ex-JICA Volunteer, Aya Tsuboi. In the picture: Tsuboi, her team and caretakers of the boreholes.

Aya Tsuboi, the Founder and one of the Directors of SUNDA says, "SUNDA builds the capacity of communities to be able to maintain their water sources by themselves with ease and never to rely on the external support, which results in people accessing safe water all the time. I believe SUNDA will greatly change livelihoods of communities in Uganda and other African countries".



## JICA SUPPORTS MINISTRY OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENT IN WASH ACTIVITIES



A resident of Kazo East village in Mubende using a SUNDA token to fetch water.

The money collected is used in case of any mechanical fault or breakdown. The caretaker contacts the Service Centre and a hand pump mechanic responds within 24 hours.

"When the case is complicated, we send a technical team from the office but if it's simple, the area hand pump mechanic handles immediately," Jackline Nakassagga, an officer at the Mubende district service centre explained.

The service centre has been set up and is fully equipped with resources such as computers, phones, and a technical team.

"The boreholes used to break down and they would take months without repair. Now given the DMS, when we call the service centre they respond immediately," Augustine Begumisa, a caretaker of a borehole at Lubugumu village in Kyabalinga Sub-county in Mubende district, said.

Mubende and Kassanda district leaders commended JICA for the interventions in the provision of water projects.

"We are happy for what JICA is giving us especially in the WASH projects and we ask you to remain serving us," Samuel Ahabwe, the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer said while meeting officials from JICA at his office.

### 'JICA HAS SAVED US FROM COVID-19' - KASSANDA RESIDENTS

When the COVID-19 pandemic broke out last year, washing of hands and social distancing were among the Standard operating Procedures announced to be followed in order to control its spread.

However, in Kassanda district these could not be followed, given the great challenge of scarcity of water.

"By that time, one had to spend at least an hour lining up to get water at any water source especially the boreholes which were even breaking down all the time. While there, it was difficult to stay away from your colleague with whom you are lining up for water," Josephine Nazziwa, a resident of Kiswera in Myanzi Sub-County Kassanda district narrates. Nazziwa's experience is not different from that of Harriet Nalubwama from Myanzi.

"In a situation where one borehole is used by over seven families yet it is breaking down all the time, people have to use water sparingly home and so washing hands all the time is difficult. At the borehole, keeping away from one another is also difficult," Nalubwama says.

Apart from the water scarcity, lack of hand washing facilities especially in public places was also another challenge.

JICA facilitated the rehabilitation of water sources where over forty boreholes were repaired and others constructed under the O&M project. It was against this background that JICA through the Ministry of Water and Environment (MoWE) extended support in a bid to fight against COVID-19. "The availability of these water sources is playing a very great role in preventing the spread of COVID-19 as people can easily have water all the time to keep clean," John Bosco Ssewankambo, the Principal Assistant Secretary said.

He adds, "People are no longer 'squeezing' themselves while lining up for water, and at their homes, they can keep washing hands regularly because water is available."

As you arrive at the Kassanda district headquarters, at the main entrance is a Pedal Assisted hand washing facility with an officer manning it, that whoever visits the district offices must wash hands first.

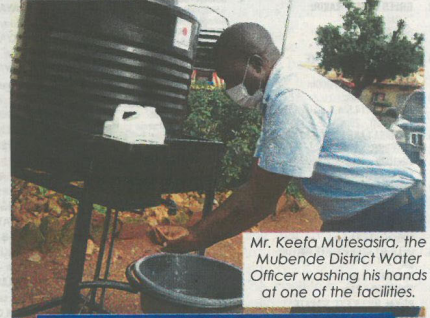
At the first office is also a jerrycan of liquid soap which I used while washing hands. This is one of the facilities offered by JICA in its campaign to help fight the pandemic.

At the entrance of the different public places at the district headquarters like at the Prison, are also similar facilities.

In some offices also are water purification facilities and posters on notice boards with messages about COVID-19.

"With the availability of water and other facilities, it is easy to tell someone to wash hands and that person obeys and that is what is happening. We are happy that given these practices, we have continued to register lower cases," Gonzaga Ssebulime, the Community Development Officer for Kassanda district said.

Haruna Kamba, the deputy district Chief Administrative officer says that with the intervention



Mr. Keefa Mutesasira, the Mubende District Water Officer washing his hands at one of the facilities.

of JICA, Kassanda is not only surviving COVID-19 but also the lives of people are to improve.

"When there is clean and safe water, people are staying healthy and so saving the money and time which would have been wasted on medication," he said.

He asks JICA to continue operating in Kassanda district especially in the provision of water in more Sub-counties.

"With the support of JICA, we are sure our communities are going to be transformed to better living conditions," he adds.

Some of the officials from JICA and MoWE have visited the district, following up the project to assess its impact.

Fukuhara Ichiro, the JICA Senior Representative was happy with the results he found in Kassanda and the positive comments from the residents and leaders.

"We are happy to see that functional water supply leverages livelihoods in rural areas and facilitates the good practice of hand washing which is a key SoP in the fight against the spread of COVID-19," he said.



Some of the materials made to remind residents to observe SoPs including washing hands.

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