

Helping Build A Better Health Future

Five years working as a clinician in a large rural hospital helped Dr. Raymond Mufwaya understand the urgent need for public health interventions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), especially in the areas of preventive, curative and promotional medicine. After returning to graduate school to specialize in Public Health, he came across a newspaper job advert for team members to establish JICA's health program in the DRC. After doing some research he was very impressed with the philosophy, values, vision and achievements of the organization. This was 2009, and since then he has been happily working for JICA. Dr. Mufwaya's primary role is Program Officer in charge of the sectors of Health, Water and Sanitation, and most of his time is divided between formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in these sectors. He is also responsible for the centralization of relations between the counterpart ministries and JICA, and he assists in surveying these sectors and participating in the Health, Water and Sanitation Coordination Group, both at the ministry level, as well as working directly with donors, technical and financial partners.

When asked his thoughts of JICA's work in the DRC, he identifies three main areas of significant progress. First is JICA's work in developing Human Resources for Health (HRH) in the DRC, in particular, improving the governance and management systems for HRH, developing an HRH

database, and improving the curricula and training for nurses and midwives. Second, is the continuous improvement of the work processes and work practices through the application of Japan's 5S-Kaizen-TQM approach in the nation's health facilities. Third, and just as important, is the ongoing development of the National Institute for Biomedical Research (INRB) with biosafety level 3 laboratories. This project has raised JICA's profile to become a major partner in the field of disease surveillance in the DRC. In fact, upgrading the technical platform of this regional reference laboratory will help shorten diagnosis periods, allow the supervision of satellite laboratories, and help respond more effectively to epidemics such as the Ebola virus.

He notes that JICA has consistently supported the integrated training of staff for the management of epidemics, particularly that of the Ebola virus, including organizing several training sessions for local staff, as well as regional training and sharing experiences between the DRC and other French-speaking African countries. Dr. Mufwaya is positive about the future. He looks forward to the day when all of the communicable disease projects work in synergy, positively impacting on the resilience of the country's health system, improving its universal health coverage, and to seeing this progress rapidly expanded to other provinces.



Dr. Raymond Mufwaya

Program Officer, JICA Democratic Republic of Congo Office