



An Exclusive Interview with two JICA Ex-Trainees in the Fight Against Ebola Virus Disease in Monsterrado County



Mr. Adolphus Kenta (Trainee Lead Person)-Ex-trainee participated in JICA training "Health Management" in 2012

Monrovia, the capital city of Liberia experienced the worst scenario of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in September 2014 which eventually resulted in a complete halt of services that affected health facilities and referral institutions including Redemption Hospital in New Kru Town.

JICA supported Monsterrado County Health and Social Welfare Team in conducting community health volunteers' trainings in two (2) zones in February and March 2015: Zuma Town (zone 100) and Clara Town (zone 300) with partnerships with health professionals in the field who have participated in JICA training. These zones are sub-divisions in the capital that were hot spots for the epidemic consideration.

"Ex-training Follow-up Project for Monsterrado County Ebola Response" is a project funded by the government of Japan through JICA in order to support ex-trainees involving in Ebola response activities in Monsterrado County.

About JICA

JICA is the governmental agency responsible for undertaking the Japanese bilateral assistance of technical cooperation, concessionary loans (ODA loans), and grant aid. JICA has about 100 overseas offices all over the world.



Two ex-trainees are in charge of the project implementation:

1. Mr. Adolphus Kenta (Trainee Lead Person) Ex-trainee participated in JICA training "Health Training Management" in 2012. Presently serving as community Health Department Director at Monsterrado County Health and Social Welfare Team Office.
2. Mr. Melvin P. Johnson: Ex-trainee participated in JICA training "Nursing Management" in 2010. Presently Nursing Director, Redemption Hospital, zone 100.



Mr. Melvin P. Johnson-Ex-participant participated in JICA training "Nursing Management" in 2010

In an exclusive interview with JICA Liberia Field Office, Mr. Kenta and Mr. Johnson were frank to share their knowledge on the fight against Ebola: their roles in Ebola response, challenges face when situation was worst, and how they kept their motivation as health professionals.

JICA: What was your role in Ebola response in Monsterrado County?

Mr. Kenta: I served as the case investigation coordinator to the sectors (the operation points where teams are based), supervised the 4 sectors team (Monsterrado was divided into 4 sectors made of 22 zones), monitored and ensured that the team response and are fully equipped, approved some immediate Infection Preventive Control supplies, and gave feedback.

Mr. Johnson: My role was coordinator for holding center at Redemption Hospital Center. There was one holding center with different compartments at the peak of the Ebola and was coordinated through division of labor and team work.

JICA: About JICA funded donations and trainings-how did the community receive them and what was their reaction?

Mr. Kenta: The communities appreciated the training and the donations, hoping to see a resilient and robust community approach.

Mr. Johnson: The community is happy about JICA funded trainings and donations and they are also concerned about sustainability and expansion because most of the participants in the training were concerned about regular supply of hand sanitizers and training for others that were left out. The hand sanitizers and hand washing buckets have helped a lot to remind us always washing our hands. The hygiene materials from the training help to keep us and other friends safe from Ebola.

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JICA: Is there anything you acquired in JICA training which was relevant or utilized in Ebola response?

Mr. Kenta: I did health system management and all of the core teaching methodology was applied.

Mr. Johnson: The management and leadership skills were very helpful in the response.



Mr. Kenta explaining about EVD community awareness training in Claratown, February 2014

JICA: What was the biggest challenge, story in September, when the situation in Monsterrado was worst?

Mr. Kenta: There were referral challenges few months before September, timelines of the response was poor-initially one ambulance was provided and I participated as one of the ambulance crew member when the first two cases were admitted at ELWA Hospital Chapel, limited feedback to family members, and sometimes cases pick-up by ambulance were not properly documented or no Infection Preventive Control.



About 150 people participated in the community awareness training held in New Kru Town, February 2014

Mr. Johnson: The story in Monsterrado was that the virus was man made virus, a demon and it was brought in the country by the government. The biggest challenge was to convince the citizens that Ebola is real and to get their compliance. The citizens believed when they saw health workers dying from Ebola Virus Disease and consistent community awareness.

JICA: How did you keep your motivation as health professional?

Mr. Kenta: I served as lead person in the fight against Ebola and got support from team members as well as other JICA ex-trainees doing surveillance and awareness training with community leaders and General Community Health Volunteers. I related with other local, International partners, Center for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Action Contré La Faim (ACF), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs).

Mr. Johnson: We health professionals were strengthening by the oath we took to serve humanity and the international support we were getting.

JICA: Is there any other relevant matter on the fight against Ebola you want to add to the newsletter?

Mr. Kenta: There must be continuous engagement on surveillance and awareness for early warning, coaching and mentoring on Infection Preventive Control, emphasis on training, and creation of county Level Emergency Operation (EOC) with needed response and logistics.

Mr. Johnson: The reason why we are Ebola free before other countries is because most of the citizens agreed that Ebola is real and it is everybody's business and took precaution. We Liberian have to do away with seeing before believing and turn to believing by hearing for fight against Ebola and other diseases.

We at JICA say "Bravo" to you and your entire team at the Monsterrado County Health and Social Welfare Team and Redemption Hospital at New Kru Town for the fight against Ebola in Liberia, especially in Monsterrado County.

JICA will continue to reach county health and medical officers who have participated in JICA training in Japan to seek their support in donation and training awareness projects in post Ebola health sector to Liberia.

- By Sam F. Conneh, JICA Liberia Field Office