



HEALTH POLICY DEVELOPMENT

(An Introduction to Japan History, Achievement and Challenges)

A Training Report on Ms. Yah Mator Zolia (Deputy Minister, Planning, Research and Development at the Ministry of Health of Liberia)

There is an urgent need for developing countries to develop capacity of personnel who can clarify issues that the government should tackle, judge the priority, develop strategies and policies, and take concern action to secure the nation's health. There was a resolution adopted on "Universal Health Coverage (UHC)" at the 67th UN General Assembly, and it is regarded that UHC will be one of the post-2015 development agenda. The concept of UHC is gradually gaining an important footing in the global health dialogue. Leaders of developing countries are expected to tackle with not only specific issues such as infection control, child and maternal health but also to achieve UHC to ensure that all citizens can use the appropriate health services they need without financial hardship.

The health policy development is a training program organized as a seminar to share Japanese experience including achieving "Universal Health Coverage (UHC)" and discuss the possible action among the participants to improve the health standards of their countries. It is offered to officials who are in position to be responsible for planning and deciding the national health policy.



Ms. Zolia contributing to a discussion during a section activity



Participants at the seminar in Japan

On January 15-27, 2017, Ms. Yah Mator Zolia attended the Health Policy Development seminar "An Introduction to Japan History, Achievement and Challenges" at JICA Tokyo International Center in Japan.

After gaining new ideas at the seminar, Ms. Zolia intends to make use of the leadership and team-building group exercise and the KAIZEN concept of continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) to enhance efficiency and productivity at her work place. "I'll share my knowledge and skills through the following ways: **a)** Lead and facilitate introduction of teamwork exercise and KAIZEN concept (Continuous Quality Improvement) to my Department and Senior Management Team through a presentation and demonstration, **b)** Use other major health sector annual review meetings to introduce these as well, and **c)** Use general lessons learnt from Japan and other countries to form formulation of Health Financing Strategy and the Health Sector Policy and Strategy," Ms. Zolia outlines her action plan.

Ms. Zolia mentioned that the leadership and teamwork techniques as well as the Kaizen method of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) impacted her greatly and promises to use them to solve some of the unique challenges face by the health sector in Liberia.

She concluded: "They are very practical and impact/result can be readily measured. For example, in the team building exercise, you actually get to KNOW WHY you often do not achieve certain objectives as a team and how that can be improved. In the Kaizen method problems are identified and solutions formulated and implemented in a simple, yet very practical way. This is a simple way of ensuring continuous improvement in health care delivery, something developing countries need to focus on in the context of UHC."

Speaking on how Ministry of Health (MOH) and JICA can work more closely in the health sector, Mr. Zolia believes MOH and JICA can jointly identify needs and develop a plan on capacity building interventions for both national and international level training.

Memory in Japan

"I will never forget the video about the village where it only took an ACTION by one village Chief to change the health situation of the whole village that faced unimaginable health challenges," Ms. Zolia reflected on one of the section at the seminar.

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.

JICA Training Program

Between 1979 and 1990, JICA accepted 232 Liberians to Japan or third countries. After the end of civil conflict, JICA resumed training program and has invited more than 255 Liberians since 2007.



Ms. Zolia actively participating in group activities

This newsletter is published based on action plan and interviews from participants under JICA Program