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Good Practice of Kassala Take-Off Project (K-TOP) in the second year and the way forward to the third year

Now, Kassala Take-off Project entered in the end of the second year. The next coming third year will be the last year for K-TOP. This Newsletter Vol. 2 No. 5 is the special edition which collects the voice from counter-parts of five clusters: Planning, Water, Agriculture and Livelihood, Health and Vocational Training. We asked each cluster's good practices in the second year and what they want to achieve in coming third year.



K-TOP counter-parts from five clusters participated in Kaizen TQM (total-quality-management) training in Bangladesh.

K-TOP Logo has finally been decided!!

In June 2013, after the voting by all K-TOP members including counter-parts and JICA team, finally, K-TOP Logo was announced as the below figure.

The meaning of the logo is as follows: in general, the sun is one of the strongest objects in our life. Here, the sun indicates the best future for Kassala. Kassala mountain is not easy to climb up. The green arrow shows the effort of K-TOP for challenging toward the sun through the mountain.

From the beginning of the third year of K-TOP, we will start to use this logo officially. The logo is symbol of K-TOP togetherness.





Planning Cluster

Kaizen practice by everyone, everywhere and every time -The way forward to disseminate Kaizen in whole Kassala-

*Voice from Mr. Gamal Mohammed
(Director General of General Directorate for Economic
Planning and Development)*



Q: What were the achievements in this second year of K-TOP?

First of all, I would like to thank for all of JICA supports.

One of the remarkable events in this second year was the Joint Mid-Term Review conducted together with K-TOP team and the Mission from Japan. Through the whole process of self-evaluation of K-TOP, we learned how to monitor and evaluate the project activities. We would like to disseminate this important survey approach, and utilize the evaluation result in the process of planning, too.

Moreover, what we cannot forget is the progress in Kaizen approach. Especially, the Kaizen training in India and the one taught by Indian Kaizen Institute lecturer in Kassala had a great benefit. During those trainings, we learned Process Mapping, the useful method for eliminating the Muda (waste) and making the civil service smoother. After the training in India, Budget Unit in DPD implemented the elimination of Muda by using the process mapping, and successfully reduced the unnecessary and not-value-adding movements of document.

At the same time, DPD as a whole is trying to keep 5S (Sort, Systematic Arrangement, Shine, Standardize and Sustain) and continuing small improvements. Before conducting 5S, there were many unused tools in the office and the documents were not in good sort. Now, DPD staff can easily find the document in file and it makes the work smoother.

We are not in a hurry for a big change. What is important is to "continue" the small improvements.

Q: Why does Kaizen attract you so much?

Because, I believe that Kaizen is exactly the same as the behavior of Muslim. In the Koran, there are words saying "Do not try to do the whole job. Do what you can do and do it right now." This is exactly same as the philosophy of Kaizen. Kaizen is the process for solving the problems. It offers many useful tools or methods to analyze the problem and its root of cause, and figure out the solutions which can be done without money. Through practicing Kaizen, we can improve the quality of service and reduce the waste of time.

Q: What does DPD want to achieve through Kaizen?

Through practicing Kaizen, we want to achieve "customer satisfaction." In DPD case, we have internal customers (the other DPD staffs) and external customers (Line Ministries, Localities, UN agencies, NGOs, Community Based Organizations (CBO), Community people and so on).

Q: What does DPD want to achieve in the third year of K-TOP?

In the Koran, there are the words saying, "If someone's heart is truly connecting to the star, one day he or she will reach there." In my case, the star means the time when the whole people in Kassala, including government officials and citizens, apply Kaizen in their works and homes. Kaizen must be practiced by everyone, everywhere and every time (3E).

For this goal, in third year of K-TOP, DPD would like to make a system for the dissemination of Kaizen in the whole Kassala. First, we will try to make a specific unit in DPD which will be in charge of the dissemination of Kaizen, tentatively called Kassala Kaizen Institute (KKI). KKI will offer the training in Kaizen for administration units in all locality offices in Kassala. Through locality offices, Kaizen approach can spread to CBO and CBO will teach community people. This is the tentative plan. We will start from discussing with the decision makers.



Water Cluster

For better access of safe drinking water for all -Many good change in SWC staff-

*Voice from Mr. Hashim Mohamed Abd Allateef
(Director of Kassala State Water Corporation(SWC))*

Q: What were the achievements in this second year of K-TOP?

There were many achievements. First, SWC completed the rehabilitation of well and introduced the water pump using solar energy in Banard village, Girba Locality. For a long time, the village did not have a functioning well. However, people in Banard village can now earn plenty of water easily from the water distribution point with reduced daily cost.

Second, capacity development in geophysical survey. From the first implementation year, SWC staffs have received the trainings on geophysical survey provided by JICA team. In this second year, SWC staffs conducted geophysical survey in Wagar, North Delta Locality, and one of staffs offered a training for PWCT staff in Khartoum.

Furthermore, there is one more achievement to be mentioned. Maybe this is the biggest achievement. Nowadays, I can see some “change in staff.”

Q: What do you mean by “change in staff?”

Through K-TOP activities, SWC staffs have changed in two senses, the level of technique and the way of thinking. On one hand, about 150 SWC staffs have taken various kinds of training through K-TOP activities including trainings in Khartoum, Morocco and Japan. I can say that the numbers of the trainings were twice or three times of the numbers in the past 2 or 3 years. Moreover, through the process of self-evaluation during the mid-term review of K-TOP, we learned and practiced how to monitor and evaluate the activities. On the other hand, not only the technique, but also the way of thinking has dramatically changed. Now SWC staffs are working based on the plan. They share the information of current situation, identify the problem, discuss and decide the action plan and implement it. For example, through Kaizen meeting, SWC staffs established Training Unit. The unit collects the voices from staffs to know what kinds of upgrading trainings are desired and provides the selected trainings. I strongly believe that staffs are changing in good way.

Q: What is “Kassala Take-off” for the Water cluster?

I would like to raise the drawing the map of the water pipe network in Kassala by using GIS system. This water-pipe network map is the first one in Sudan. In the past, there was no visualized information regarding the water pipe line and it was difficult to figure out the place where the problem occurred and SWC staffs were sent. However, now, we can easily know the placement information. The information of the map is regularly updated by the staffs.

Q: What do you want to achieve in the third year?

In the third year, SWC aims to reduce the water leakage in urban area from 35% to 8%. In rural area, we need to consider how to reduce the cost and, at the same time, how to make the rehabilitated well sustainable. Concerning these points, how to train and enable the operators in the rural area to maintain the well is important.

Q: What is the goal for SWC?

The goal is “to establish access to safe drinking water for people living in both urban and rural area.” For this purpose, SWC staffs are working.

Since I can see big difference in staff capacity before and after K-TOP as I mentioned before, I strongly think K-TOP is the No. 1 project and hope there will be 2nd phase too.





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Agriculture and Livelihood Cluster

Agriculture links to income generation, which is a basis for better life

*Voice from Mr. Ali Mohamed Ali
(Director General of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry,
Irrigation, Animal Resources and Fishery)*

Q: What were the achievements in this second year of K-TOP?

In the Agriculture and Livelihood cluster, there are many achievements in this year. The first is the development of capacities of the staff, especially those in TTEA. Through K-TOP, they have received various kinds of training both in Sudan and abroad. In my opinion, this is one of the biggest features of JICA supports. Although there are many development agencies working with us, JICA is the only organization which sends our officers to abroad for training. Moreover, JICA has been always working closely with us as a partner of the government. Nowadays, I can see our officers have confidence. This is particularly important for extension officers, as they have to work in front of farmers to demonstrate and disseminate new technologies.

The second achievement is the formulation of farmers' associations for using agricultural machines in Wad El Helew. Since small-scale farmers cannot afford agricultural machines, they have to rely on traditional ways or rent a machine from the large-scale farmers after they use it for their own farms. This results in delay of land preparation and significantly the decreases of productivity. In order to cope with this problem, K-TOP has organized small-scale farmers' associations, to which the ministry leases agricultural machines during the season. It also provides the associations with training of how to operate and maintain the machine. Now, they are succeeding in managing the machinery by themselves and increasing the productivity.

Third, good practices have been observed in rural development. Through the pilot activities, there are restaurant group and biscuit production group in Sawagi and women's group in Wad El Helew.

Finally, there are also good performances in horticulture zone and food irrigation zone. For the former zone, K-TOP introduced improved techniques of producing and selling vegetables, including onions and tomatoes. By using the new techniques e.g. for the nursery and storage, farmers cooperating with the project could enjoy selling them at the time of short supply. To the latter zone, some new cash crops have been introduced. Farmers, who have concentrated on sorghum production only, are now cultivating sunflowers and pigeon peas in Gash area.

Q: What is "Kassala Take-Off" for the Agriculture and Livelihood cluster?

Kassala Take-Off meant for us is the formulation of farmers association and income generation activity for women's groups. Each activity is succeeding in increasing their income. Such income generation leads to better nutrition at household level and enables more children to go to school.

Q: What do you want to achieve in the coming third year?

Our primary target is to complete the work plan. On the bases of its completion, we would like to expand the good practices to other areas, following the recommendations made by the Mid-Term Review of the project. Since the coming year is the last year for K-TOP, my concern is sustainability. For sustainability, more capacity building of both officers in the ministry and farmers is essentially required. Especially, we would like to strengthen farmers' skills and knowledge and make them self-dependent.

Q: What is the goal for Ministry of Agriculture?

Our goal is that all communities in Kassala are secured without facing any difficulties in receiving basic human needs such as education, health and so on. In order to enjoy higher education and better health, the income generation is prerequisite. In case of Kassala, many citizens are obtaining their income by farming. Agriculture is therefore a basis for better life.





Health Cluster

Big contribution for the reduction of maternal mortality rate

-Achievements in capacity building of Village Midwives-

*Voice from Dr. Ali Adam Mohamed
(Reproductive Health Coordinator, Reproductive Health
Division in Ministry of Health)*



Q: What were the achievements in this second year of K-TOP?

From the preparation phase we have worked for the reduction of maternal mortality rate in Kassala. According to National Household Survey, the maternal mortality rate in Kassala decreased from 1,414 (2006) to 244.9 (2010) per 100,000. Although the latter rate is still high, this reduction is big achievement and we can say that K-TOP contributed for it.

In this second year, especially, we succeeded in the capacity building of Village Midwives (VMWs). As K-TOP, Reproductive Health division in Ministry of Health and JICA team, have conducted 9 batches of in-service trainings in total, in first and second years. The trainings covered all VMWs in our targeted area, namely, Girba locality and Wad El Helew locality, and also some VMWs from New Halfa locality too.

Step by step, the quality of the training itself became high. In each in-service training, the facilitators, who train VMWs in the training, held pre-meeting before the batch start and post-meeting after the batch finished. In each meeting, they discussed the good points and the points have to be improved of the training, and reflect the lesson learned in the next batch. Moreover, in order to make the training learner-centered, K-TOP provided coaching training for the facilitators, and developed new training materials which use visualized materials. The visualized materials are easier to understand even for the VMWs who cannot read or write.

Even after the training, through supportive supervision, we aimed to sustain the VMWs capacity and even continue to update the technique and knowledge. Health visitors visit each VMW and check whether the VMWs are reflecting correctly what they learned in the in-service training and the condition of tools. Through all these activities, we can see the change in the quality of VMWs' service in their daily attitude and the result of the post-test.

However, we were still facing with the issue of recruitment of VMWs. Although the capacity of VMWs was getting higher, the numbers of formally employed VMWs by Ministry of Health were not enough for covering all communities in Kassala. Therefore, K-TOP team held the annual festival for VMWs in Girba locality. In the Festival, we advocated the recruitment issue and, at the same time, tried to raise the awareness of community people regarding reproductive health. Nowadays, much more considerable numbers of VMWs are recruited by Kassala State Government.

I believe one of the reasons for the above achievements is that all K-TOP members have good communication from the planning to implementation of the activities, and worked as one family.

Q: What is "Kassala Take-Off" for Health cluster?

For our Health cluster goal, since the reduction of maternal mortality rate cannot be achieved only by reproductive health, it is important to have a multi-sectorial project like K-TOP. For example, in order to have a safe delivery, a pregnant woman needs better nutrition food and safe drinking water. For buying better food, income generation through Agriculture and Livelihood cluster activities are relevant, and for safe drinking water, of course Water cluster activities are important.

Q: What do you want to achieve in the third year?

In the third year, we would like to continue the good practice of VMWs in-service training. Additionally to that, we want to make more focus on the Emergency Obstetric Care (EMoC) in hospital. For complementing VMWs' reproductive health service, it is necessary to have a good referral system to hospital. Moreover, we will continue the end-user training for medical equipment and the rehabilitation of Wad El Helew hospital.



Vocational Training Cluster

Achievements based on Strategic Plan

-Vocational Training, as a solution for activating industry in Kassala-

*Voice from Mr. Hassan Meki Ibraheem
(Director of Kassala Vocational Training Center)*

Q: What were the achievements in this second year of K-TOP?

In this second year, all achievements in KVTC are based on KVTC Strategic Plan (2012-2014). After K-TOP started the project activities in KVTC, we conducted a labor market survey. According to the survey report, K-TOP team made the KVTC Strategic Plan and clarified the five strategic goals: 1) quality training, 2) human resource, 3) facility and equipment, 4) management and 5) finance. We allocate a staff in charge for each goal and, day by day, we are making progress. Every week, we hold the meeting of Strategic Plan Implementation Committee (SPIC) and report the progress and present action plan.

First, for better training program, KVTC prepared vocational training guideline, training standard, training based on needs of market and efficient use of training materials. Second, regarding human resource, K-TOP team conducted interviews with all staffs to make a job description for all. This avoids the overlap of the tasks. Furthermore, KVTC trainers received many training of trainers (TOT) taught by Japanese experts and upgraded their technique. Third, in order to make better working environment, both trainers and trainees became to practice 5S (Sort, Systematic Arrangement, Shine, Standardize and Sustain) together. At the same time, with Japanese Embassy financial support, KVTC is now constructing a new dormitory enabling to accommodate the trainees from rural area. Fourth, for better management, we are having weekly information sharing meeting. Fifth, we are trying to secure KVTC fund.

Q: Was there any remarkable change in KVTC?

Yes. I can see big changes in the work and the attitude of trainers and trainees. Now, all KVTC works are well-organized and based on the plan. At the same time, I can see trainers and trainees like KVTC much more than before. Compared to the past, trainers and trainees became more responsible for attending the training and using training tools properly. After exam, I saw both trainers and trainees brought some sweets for greeting each other efforts. I was very happy to see that scene.

Q: What is "Kassala Take-Off" for Vocational Training cluster?

In this second year, KVTC tried to establish "win-win" relationship with the other organizations including technical schools, companies, unions and so on. Especially, in SSC case, we could have many good practices. For example, on one hand, KVTC offered upgrading course for SSC employees based on their needs, and on the other hand, SSC offered KVTC broken engine as a teaching material and accepted more in-plant trainees from KVTC.

Q: What does KVTC want to achieve in coming third year?

There are three main goals for KVTC for coming third year. First, to provide the qualified graduates. We would like to train our trainees toward the level enough for working with any company, workshop and industry. Second, to establish good cooperate relationship with private sectors, industry and government sectors. Third, this might be the most important point, to raise the awareness of Kassala citizens regarding the importance of vocational training.

Q: Why do you think that vocational training is important?

Kassala state suffered from war in the past. There are a lot of refugees come from Eritrea or Ethiopia. We are facing with the lack of resource. However, Kassala has numerous small businesses. Thus, for activating the economy in Kassala, upgrading the small businesses can be the solution. I believe that vocational training can contribute for this.





K-TOP Photo Gallery



- 1) Planning: Training on Kaizen taught by Indian Lecturer in DPD (Making process mapping).
- 2) Planning / Agriculture and Livelihood: Joint impact Survey conducted by M&E Unit in DPD and Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit in Ministry of Agriculture.
- 3) Water: SWC senior engineer trains a young engineer of SWC to measure the level of topography in Wagar.
- 4) Agriculture and Livelihood: Field Day in Atbara East. Extension officer introduced the water harvesting to farmers.
- 5) Water: Water pump system by using solar panel in Banard.



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K-TOP Photo Gallery



- 1) Health: Facilitator uses visualized training material in the village midwives' in-service training.
- 2) Health: Reproductive health awareness drama in the community.
- 3) Vocational Training: KVTC trainer who participated in the training in Malaysia conducted the training for trainers in KVTC.
- 4) Vocational Training: KVTC trainees went to SSC for Study Visit.

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