Activity Report of Field Research

The Role of School Management Committee and the Factors Influencing its Working in Ugandan Primary School

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I.   Summary

I visited Uganda from 8th September 2018 to 4th October 2018. I researched School Management Committee (SMC) under Dr. James Wokadala in Makerere University. SMC is an organization that is required in every public school by educational low. The members are a head teacher, local government officers, foundation body, and representatives of teachers, parents, and OB/OG. Today, SMC is introduced by many countries as an organization to connect with government, schools, and communities. In Uganda, it was also introduced after independence from the UK, but it has been paid more attention after the 2000s.

In Uganda, the enrollment rate of primary education has already reached more than 90%. However, the completion rate is only around 50%. Although there are many reasons, one of them is low quality of education. In this situation, does SMC contribute to enhancing the quality of education? SMC is regarded both as effective and meaningless depends on literature, but what roles do Ugandan SMC play? In this research, the aim is to clarify the role and effect of SMC. In order to answer them, I prepared two research questions. One is "What is the role of SMC in Ugandan primary school?" and another is "What are the factors influencing the role of SMC?". In my field research, I visited 12 primary schools in two regions. I conducted interviews to head teacher for research question 1 and questionnaire survey to SMC members for research question 2.

From the research, I found that the role of SMC is different depends on schools even though it is decided by the governmental document. In case of well working SMC, it approaches to parents and it contributes to increasing completion. Also, it shares the school's issues among members and it contributes to solving them as well. However, I could see many problems. First of all, it is facing with lack of budget. SMC is monitoring to way to use of governmental subsidy, but it does not have an additional budget. Therefore, it is not easy to increase classrooms or teachers even though they are lacking. In addition to that, SMC members do not have incentives to work because they cannot get a salary, or some supports. Thus, one of the factors that influence the working of SMC is a mental one. That is an attachment to the school. In short, members desire to do something in order to solve the school's problem even though they do not have enough money if they have much attachment to the school.

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As for the role of SMC, I could see difference consciousness to the work among members. In other words, some members evaluate own works as good ones but others do not. It means that the consciousness of the required level of SMC is different depending on each member. From this point, I can say that individual ability, consciousness, and way of thinking to education and schools are an important factor in looking role of SMC.

Ⅰ．要旨

『ウガンダの初等教育における学校運営委員会の役割とそれを決定づける要因』

　2018 年 9 月から 10 月の約 1 か月間、東アフリカのウガンダを訪れ、マケレレ大学の James 先生のもと、学校運営委員会に関する調査を行った。学校運営委員会（School Management Committee/ SMC）とは、ウガンダの公立小学校に設置が義務付けられている組織のことであり、地方政府、財団員、教師、保護者、卒業生の各代表が属している。今日、コミュニティと学校、そして学校と政府をつなぐ組織として様々な国で導入されており、ウガンダでも独立後すぐに導入された。そして 2000 年代に入り、その役割により注目が集まっている。

　ウガンダの初等教育は、純就学率は 90％を超えている一方で、修了率は 50％ほどにとどまっている。その原因は様々であるが、そのうちの一つに低い教育の質がある。そのような中で、果たして SMC は教育の質改善に貢献しているのだろうか。SMC については、効果的とも、意味がないとも言われているが、ウガンダの SMC は実際にどのような役割を果たしているのだろうか。この研究は、現地調査を通して、ウガンダの SMC の役割と効果を明らかにすることが目的である。そのために 2 つのリサーチクエスチョンを設けた。1 つが、「ウガンダの初等教育における SMC の役割とは何か」、もう 1 つが、「どんな要素が、ウガンダの SMC の機能に影響を与えているか」である。1 つ目は純粋に、その役割を明らかにするためのものであり、2 つ目は、うまく機能している場合とそうでない場合がある中で、SMC の機能や役割に影響を与えている要素を明らかにするためのものである。

　現地調査では、ウガンダの公立小学校 12 校を訪れ、インタビューと質問票による調査を行った。インタビューは主にリサーチクエスチョン 1 のためであり、校長先生を対象に行われた。そして質問票は、リサーチクエスチョン 2 のために、SMC のメンバーに対して行われた。

　調査の結果、SMC の役割は政府の文書によって規定されてはいるものの、学校によって大きく異なっていることが分かった。うまく機能している場合は、親への直接的なアプローチにより、就学率の向上等にもつながっているし、学校が抱える問題を共有、解決にも大いに貢献している。しかし、SMC を取り巻く問題も多く存在していた。まず、予算の不足である。SMC は政府からの公立学校への補助金の使い道を管理しているが、追加で予算があるわけではない。そのため、教室や教師が不足していても、追加で増やすことは容易ではない。そもそも SMC の活動自体に給料等が支給されるわけではないので、必要最低限の業務以外のことを行うインセンティブも見られない。そのため、SMC の活動の質を左右するのが、意外にも精神的な面であり、その学校に対する愛着が大きいと思われた。つまり、SMC のメンバーがその学校に対する愛着が強く、学校が抱える問題を何とかしたいという気持ちが強い場合、予算不足を乗り越えてでも、解決を図ろうとする。

　また、SMC の役割に関しては、メンバーの中で認識の違いが見られた。つまり自分の所属する SMC の働きを振り返った際に、同じ SMC に対しても、うまく機能していると回答する人もそうでない人も見られた。これも SMC に求めるレベルの個々の認識が異なっていることを意味し、総じて個人個人の SMC や学校、教育に対する考え方や気持ちの違いが大きいように思われる。

II. Research Activity

1. Introduction

I visited Uganda from 8th September 2018 to 4th October 2018 in order to research Ugandan education. Uganda is located in East Africa, and surrounded by Kenya, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and Tanzania. Uganda used to be called "The Pearl of Africa" because of rich nature. Figure 1 is the map of Africa. You can see the location and size of Uganda that is surrounded by a red circle in the map. The size is 24km2 that is as same as the main island of Japan (Honshu) and the population is 42.86 million that is as same as the capital area of Japan.

Figure 1. Map of Africa

(jonahzsong.com)

After independence from the United Kingdom, Uganda has experienced some conflicts. That is why the economic situation was not stable for long years by late the 1980s. Although GDP growth rate is increasing more and more after that and the rate is 4.2% in 2017, Uganda is still regarded as one of the poorest countries in the world.

My study area is education, so I mention basic educational information of Uganda as an introduction. Universal Primary Education (UPE) started in 1997 and Ugandan primary education is provided 7 years as compulsory education. Graph 1 shows primary education data in Uganda. The remarkable point is the completion rate (the percentage of students who finished primary education). It is only around 50%. Considering that net enrollment rate (the percentage of students who enter primary school) is more than 90%, half of the students cannot finish primary education even though they once entered primary school.

Graph 1. Primary Education Data
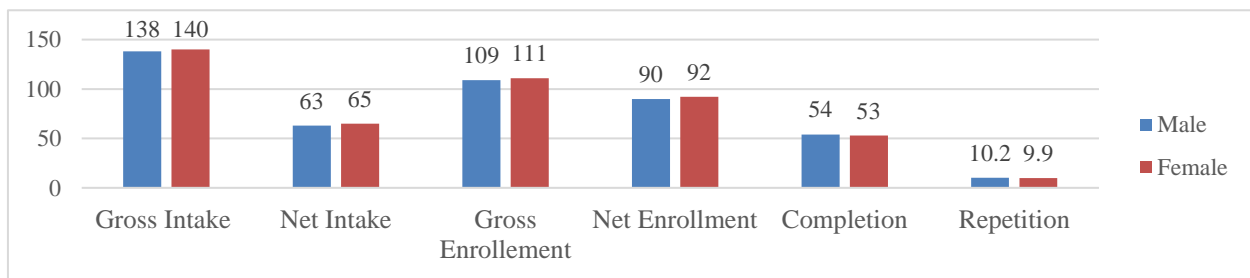
(Created by the author based on UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014)

From this situation, I would like to contribute to increasing the number of students who can complete primary education. That is because primary education can be a base of human development and it can

increase future possibilities of each student. How can we contribute to increasing the completion rate of primary education? The answer is not only one, thus, we can deal with it from many aspects. In this situation, I focus on school management. School management is one of the key factors to increase the completion rate. Good management can improve the quality of education, and high quality of education can prevent students' drop out. In this context, "good school management" means the situation that schools know and share their own problems and they can deal with them by cooperating with communities and local governments.

Figure 2. Idea of my research

Good school management → high quality of education → increase completion rate

(created by the author)
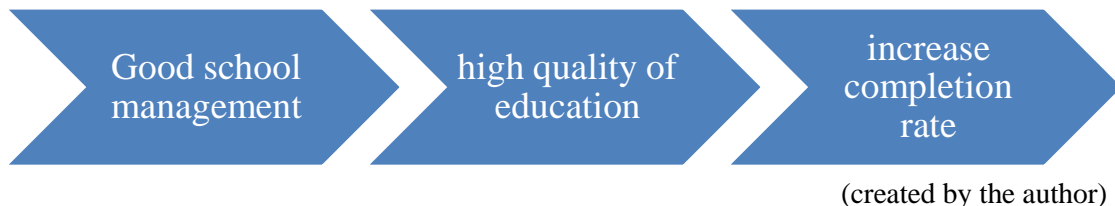
2. Study Area

My focusing area is educational management as I mentioned. Especially, I focus on the School Management Committee (SMC). SMC is a governmental organization for connecting with schools, communities, and government. Each school has SMC and the member is local government, teachers, parents, community people. Participation of parents and communities have been spotlighted with efficient school administration for decades, and decentralization became the trend of educational policy. Some policies encourage form SMC as a strategy to improve the management of education at the district level.

In Uganda, SMC was established by the state government after independence around the 1970s. However, it became an important actor when UPE was introduced. That was 1997. After 2000, some public documents about education were written and they were related to SMC; Guidelines to Enhance Governance and Management of Schools in 2001, Education Act in 2008 and Basic Requirements and Minimum Standards (BRMS) in 2010. The 2001 guideline was written to enhance governance and management of the school, and both of Education Act and 2010 BRMS reflect "establishing the linkage with the community and parents". Today, SMC is organized based on the 2008 education act. I was able to actually see the Education Act in field research. Each school has handbook of the Act like the photo.

According to the World Bank Report, the strategic roles of SMC in Uganda are 1)school-level planning and systems development, 2)supporting school teams to achieve the highest


Photo 1: The Education Primary and Post-Primary Act
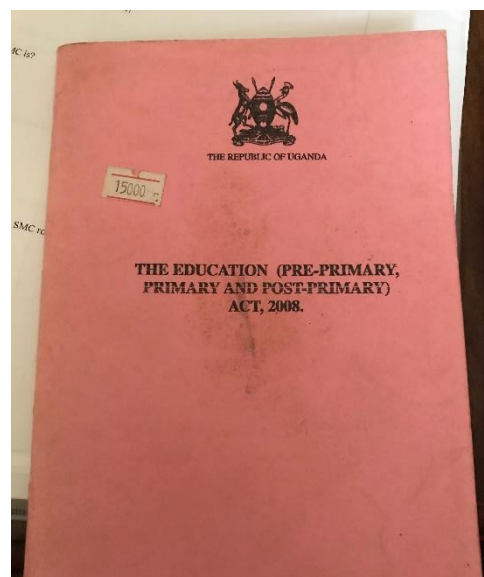
possible standards, and 3)holding head teachers and staff accountable. However, the actual role is different depends on schools. To investigate the actual role is one of my research purposes. Also, the reported effect of SMC is different depend on literature or research. For example, in the study of Malawi, it is pointed out that there is an indirect positive relationship between communities' participation and students' score. On the other hand, only 32% of responding SMC members reported "school development planning as a key responsibility of SMCs", also 32% reported "monitoring school program implementation is as a core function of SMCs in Ugandan report. That is why I also focus on the effect of SMC to quality of education.

3. Methodology

In this research, I have some research questions. Research question 1 is "What is the role of SMC in Ugandan primary school?" and research question 2 is "What are the factors influencing the role of SMC?". I would like to clarify the role and effect of SMC by answering these questions. Also, I prepared some sub-questions. As for research question 1, I prepared "What is the recognition gap for the role of SMC among SMC members?" and "What are the differences about the role of SMC between rural and urban area?" as sub-questions. As for research question 2, "What are the factors promoting/preventing SMC's working in Ugandan primary school?" was prepared.

Figure 3. Map of Uganda
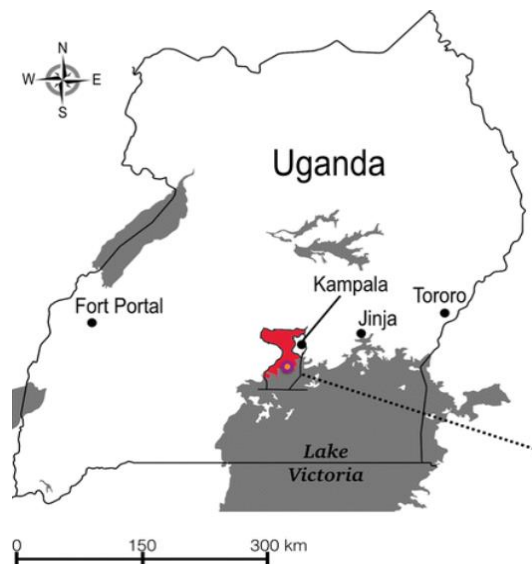
In order to research these questions, I visited 12 public primary schools. I randomly selected the schools from school list of Kampala and Wakiso. Figure 3 is a map of Uganda. Kampala is the capital city of Uganda where you can see it near Lake Victoria, and Wakiso (red area in the map) is one of the Ugandan districts that is nearest to Kampala. Kampala is an urban area and Wakiso has both of urban and rural area. The reasons why I chose Kampala and Wakiso as my research field is that there is a various level of schools. Both of them are in the central part of Uganda, so the average level of schools are high compared to other regions. However, not all schools are high level. That is why I can see various kind of schools.

As for research question 1, I conducted a semi-structured interview to 12 head teachers (1 head teacher per one school) and 2 SMC chairperson, and I conducted a questionnaire survey to SMC members for research question 2. I asked these questions in the interview with 14 people. In total, therefore, I conducted interview with 14 informants. Regarding the questionnaire survey, I prepared multiple-choice questions. These questions are divided into three parts. Part 1 is background information of respondents,

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1. What do you think about SMC or Community participation?
2. What do you think differences between SMC and PTA?
3. What do you think role of SMC is?
4. In your understanding, what is the most important role among all SMC roles?
5. What is needed for effective activities of SMC?
6. Do you have any difficulties when you participate SMC or cooperate with SMC members?
7. Who participate in SMC meeting?
8. What things are discussed in SMC meeting?
9. Do you think whether SMC can contribute to increase students' score/ enhance school accountability/ improve students' completion rate? Why?
10. In your understanding, what is the biggest issue in the school?
11. Do you think that SMC can deal with the issue? Why?

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part 2 is characteristics of SMC, and part 3 is the role of SMC. I tried examining what extent the characteristics of SMC influence the function of SMC. Figure 3 is an analytical framework. The left part is corresponding with part 1 and part 2, and the right part is corresponding with part 3 of my questionnaire.

Figure 4. Analytical Framework
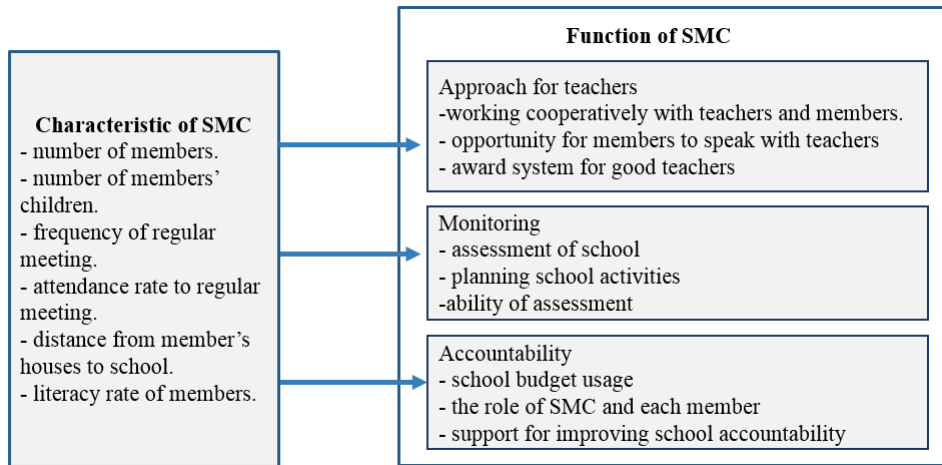
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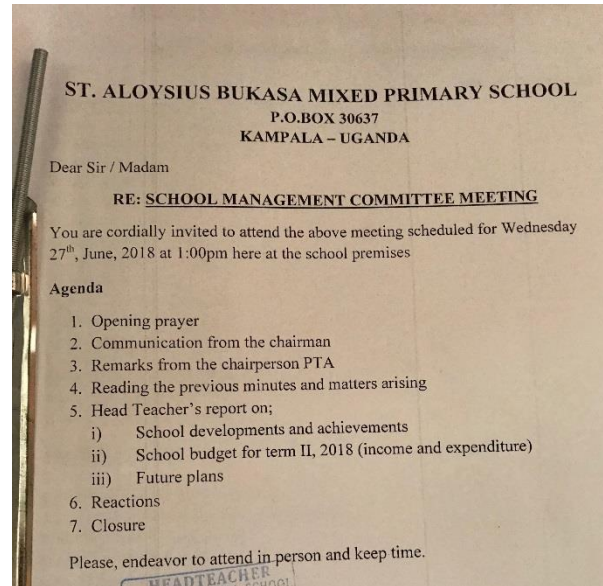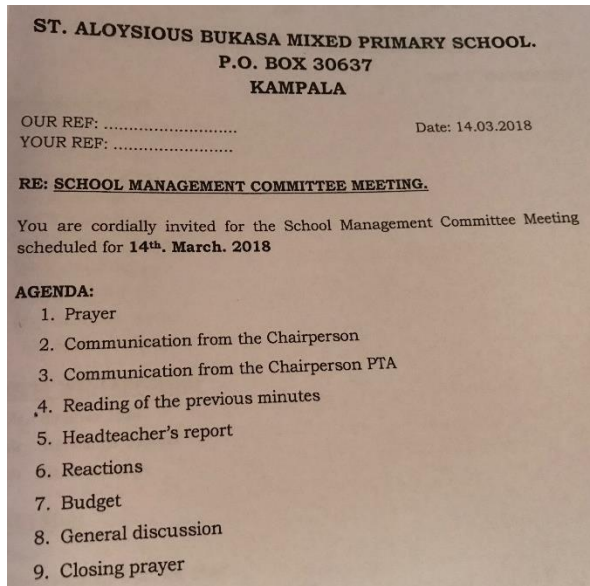
4. Research Findings

Good school management is related to the high quality of education, and generally speaking, it can increase the completion rate. Also, SMC has been regarded as an important organization for schools in Uganda. That is why I'm focusing on the SMC's role and quality. How does it work for good school management? This is the summary of my research background.

From interview to head teachers, I was able to grasp actual roles of SMC. A meeting is held once a term (three times per year), and members are called in an emergency. What they talk in a meeting is different depending on the meeting, but they normally talk about school development plan and budget.

Photo 2: a report of a SMC meeting

ST. ALOYSIOUS BUKASA MIXED PRIMARY SCHOOL.
P.O. BOX 30637
KAMPALA

OUR REF: ....   Date: 14.03.2018
YOUR REF: ....

RE: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING.

You are cordially invited for the School Management Committee Meeting scheduled for 14th. March. 2018

AGENDA:
1. Prayer
2. Communication from the Chairperson
3. Communication from the Chairperson PTA
4. Reading of the previous minutes
5. Headteacher's report
6. Reactions
7. Budget
8. General discussion
9. Closing prayer

ST. ALOYSIUS BUKASA MIXED PRIMARY SCHOOL
P.O.BOX 30637
KAMPALA – UGANDA

Dear Sir / Madam

RE: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

You are cordially invited to attend the above meeting scheduled for Wednesday 27th, June, 2018 at 1:00pm here at the school premises

Agenda

1. Opening prayer
2. Communication from the chairman
3. Remarks from the chairperson PTA
4. Reading the previous minutes and matters arising
5. Head Teacher's report on;
   i)   School developments and achievements
   ii)   School budget for term II, 2018 (income and expenditure)
   iii) Future plans
6. Reactions
7. Closure

Please, endeavor to attend in person and keep time.

HEADTEACHER

These photos are report of an SMC meeting. You can see what they talked in the meeting. According to head teachers, roles of SMC are "planning", "monitoring", and "implementing". Members create a school plan, and monitor and support in order to achieve the plan. However, their main focus is budget. Government provides UPE grant to each school, and schools can be administrated by the kind of subsidy. Thus, the grant is very important for both of the schools and government. In this situation, SMC has to monitor the way to use the grant and schools have to report it. From this aspect, SMC is not a community organization but institutionalized to be part of the governmental structure. In addition to that, people consider that schools are "government's schools" not "their own schools". They are public schools, so it might be natural. However, they do not have the conscious of ownership much.

Also, SMC is volunteer work. They don't get any salary from the work. Therefore, it is difficult to keep their motivation to SMC's work. SMC consists of 12 or 13 people; 6 are foundation body (foundation body means religious structure that helps the school such as churches), 2 are local government, others are a head teacher, teacher representative, parent's representative, and OB/OG representative. Not all members live near the school and some of them have other works. In addition to that, they do not always have an attachment to the school. That is why not all members participate in regular meeting, and school problems are sometimes not shared among members.

On the condition, they are facing with the lack of money. Therefore, it is difficult to implement some solutions even though they understand the lack of classrooms and teachers, for example. The point is how to use the limited money. Basically speaking, governmental subsidy (UPE grant) is decided based on the number of students. Thus, every SMC has the same condition and almost all of them are suffering

from the problem of lack of money. However, some SMCs work well, and the others do not even though under the same condition. This difference seems to come from the difference level of attachment. In other words, those who have much attachment to the school want to improve the situation even though they don't have enough money. A school that I visited has good SMC, and the SMC has some OB. Thus, they work hard in order to improve school situation with their passion.

This is some results of the questionnaire survey.

- In some question, teachers and other members have different conscious to current works of SMC. For example, teachers tend to report lower (5point scale) to this question, "the majority of SMC members mostly visit schools when they have been called for meetings by a head teacher".

- In some question, I found different response between the urban area and rural area. For example, Rural schools tend to report lower to the question, "The SMC has an organized system of providing teachers with bonus and top up in UPE schools in the district". Also, many rural teachers pointed out the budget/money problem in the interview rather than urban schools.

- The education level of SMC members is different among schools. There is no correlation with the region, but the SMC which consists of members with the highest education level is the most active among 12 schools.

- The distance from the house to school is not correlated with the function of SMC and the attendance rate to SMC meeting.

- Kampala (urban) responded higher in almost every question, but rural area is higher in only two below questions.

1) the SMC have the adequate technical capacity to monitor schools' academic program

2) the SMC has got an ability to provide oversight on UPE capitation grant

5. Discussion

There are two points to discuss; one is an approach to solve school issues and another is an approach to parents. How do they approach to the school issues? They can share these issues to some extent, but it is not easy to solve because of the lack of money as I mentioned. Especially, in the rural area. SMC does not have much power to manage it. That is why we have to think an effective way to use the money. However, attachment to the school can enhance the working ability of SMC.

As for an approach to parents, I could hear some stories that SMC talks with parents to improve their conscious to children's education. However, normally speaking, Ugandan SMC does not work to connect with schools and communities including parents. It connects with government and schools but it is not an organization to enhance community participation. It is because the member of SMC. Ugandan SMC includes only one parent representative and the majority of the rest is from local government and foundation body. What roles do the one parents play in SMC? What is the relationship with PTA?

6. Conclusion

The role and function of SMC are different depending on schools. If it works well, it can contribute to increase completion rate by following up parents and to solve school issues. However, the main role is to fulfill accountability for the usage of governmental subsidy. In other words, it is not directly related to the quality of education. However, some SMC works well and contribute to solving these problems. In this research, I examine that the difference comes from individual ability or attachment to the school, but I would like to see the reason in more detail by researching more SMC.

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III. Reflection to the GLTP in Africa

1. My motivation to participate in the GLTP

I decided to apply to the GLTP in a minute when I heard about this program. I did not hesitate to apply at all because I really wanted to go to Africa and I found it the best opportunity for me.

I was interested in Africa since I was a junior high school student after my teacher told us the situation of it in social class. What the teacher told us was very typical and certain perceived notion, but I really shocked the "poor" situation there. Then, I thought that I should help and contribute to improving the situation. It was kind of hypocritical mind but the mind has motivated me to study Africa until today. I started studying Africa from my bachelor thesis, and I noticed that Africa is not "poor" continent. Indeed, we can point out the poor economic situation, but I found they have internal power and we should not regard Africa as an only poor continent. However, many Japanese people tend to regard it as poor and quite far from us in terms of distance and mind. I want to change the situation and know about Africa more, so I decided to continue to study it in my master program and participating GLTP.

2. Field experiences

I stayed in Uganda for one month. It was a quite short period because of my school plan, and it was the saddest point but I was able to conduct research and experience the local life. I have already mentioned about field research in the part II of this report, so I will write other things that I experienced in Uganda. What I want to say in this part is "meeting". I met and talked with many people during my stay. It means local people and those who are working at Japanese organizations in Uganda.

As for Japanese organization, I visited JICA Uganda and Ashinaga Uganda. I heard refugee problem and Japanese support from JICA, and orphan education from Ashinaga. I was able to hear the real situation from the Japanese perspective in Japanese. It was rare and valuable opportunity. I could feel the Japanese presence in a good way. Also, I found some young people who are approximately the same age as me. They were working for Ugandan people and I was impressed.

Regarding local people, I met both of high-rank officers and students. I talked about Ugandan issues with them. Many local students pointed out the lack of money. They cannot take higher education without money even though they want to study. It is related to problems of the labor market or industry. I thought problems are connected to each other, and we have to take a sustainable way to solve.

Photo 3: Gobero Baptist School

Considering that I cannot meet these people if I did not go to the field, I want to emphasize the importance of field experiences and GLTP support to realize the experiences.

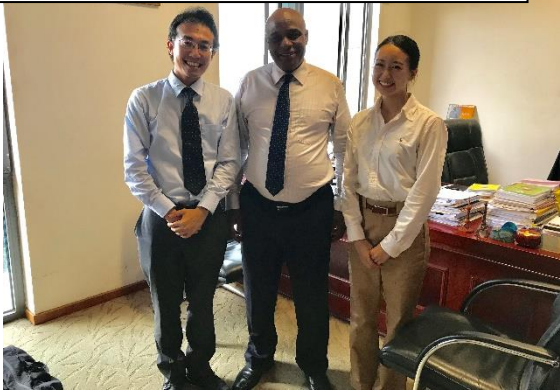Photo 4: meeting with Dr. Albert who is a senior adviser in MOE

Photo 5: interview with head teacher of Gobero Baptist School

3. Challenges

It was my first time to go to Sub Sahara Africa, so visiting there by my self is challengeable. In addition to that, it was also the first time to conduct field research. I found that it was most difficult to plan field research and conduct research. For example, I wanted to conduct an interview with parents but I could not find them. Also, I was not able to pick up my questionnaires from all of them. Considering this reality, I had to make a more realistic research plan. I learned the point from this experience, I want to make good use of it in next time.

Apart from research, I did not have any problems including health condition. Although African countries are regarded not as safe, something dangerous does not happen if we take care. It is as same as other countries. If I have to point out the dangerous point, we have to take care of cars and bikes. That is because the traffic is so heavy and traffic signals do not work.

As for foods, I have eaten local foods as my lunch at my supervisor's office almost every day. It was banana, rice, corn, beans and beef soup. Local foods were healthy and organic ones, so I had never experienced health problems during my stay.

Photo 6: Ugandan people use motor bikes everytime

Photo 7: Ugandan traditional food

4. How to use of this experience to your future career development

   I would like to become a bridge between Japan and Africa in the future. I want to contribute to improving the educational situation from the academic aspect during master students, but I want to contribute from other aspects after graduating. For example, creating a new business in Africa. I found many needs and room for new business in Africa. Also, African market can be next market for Japanese companies. Therefore, I want to connect both needs, the Japanese company's side and African side. It is needed for sustainable partnerships in order to improve its situation. I think it is "win-win relationships". Considering it, a business can be a good solution.

5. Encouragement to other students

   Needless to say, field experience is important. That is because there are many things that we can feel and understand only in the real field. GLTP is the best program for students who want to go to the field, that is Africa, in terms of generous support. The program provides us not only monetary support but also precious community. It means that GLTP officers know many people who have already been to Africa and the officers also know much about Africa. Therefore, we can ask them our concerns before going to Africa. That is why I highly recommend applying the program.

To those who will go to Africa for the first time

   Africa is far from Japan geographically and of cause there are many differences between African countries and Japan. However, what I thought in Africa is "similarity". In short, life of Africa is not so different basically and fundamentally. People normally spent their lives as same as Japanese people. Only different points tend to be pointed out when we talk about Africa, but I found that we can look more at the similarity. Therefore, I want to say to those who will go to Africa for the first time that you do not have to worry much about African life.