

Non-Profit Organization “Global Bridge Network”

Fiscal Year 2020 Activity Report

1. Activity Period: 2020/4/1～2021/3/31

2. Activity Summary :

Due to the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic, a state of emergency was declared in Japan, and a lockdown alert was declared in Uganda as well, thus our activities were restricted. In addition, two projects conducted during 2017-2019 were completed; therefore, Global Bridge Network (GBN) was unable to conduct any projects in FY2020. However, amid COVID-19, many women and youth lost their jobs in Uganda. GBN received requests from SORAK, GBN's counterpart, for financial support, and subsequently, a microfinance project including the provision of low interest loans, vocational training, and business skills training for women and youth groups was started.

In this year, GBN focused on applying for a grant from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to develop activities of a previous project, “Improvement of School Environment to Combat Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Challenges to Stop Adolescent Girls School Dropouts in Uganda” (2017-2019). Due to strong support from JICA Yokota, the GBM project was approved as a JICA Partnership Program and is scheduled to start in FY2021.

During FY2020, although the aforementioned projects were limited, GBN remains committed to submitting applications for several projects such as education, construction of an orphanage, and environmental protection. During this process, we actively engaged in communications to ensure a strong sense of teamwork with local partners to exchange opinions and share a common understanding via online communication tools such as zoom. In FY2021, GBN needs to strengthen its organizational ability and secure human resources to start the new project with JICA.

3. Projects Conducted

GBN activities consist of two key areas: “International Support” and “International Communication Promotion.”

① International Support

1) Microcredit project (Unsecured small loans for the poor)



In rural Mubende, Uganda, more than 80% of youth and women are self-employed as farmers or minor businesses, and most live in poverty. They can't afford to spend a minimum living amount on food, medical care, clothing, and school supplies, etc., and have no access to necessary credit for generating income for activities. Due to the impact of COVID-19, there are more and more young people in financial distress. To address this need, SORAK started a microcredit project for youth and women groups to support their economic independence.

During the year under review, SORAK did some modifications to make a bakery, which entailed and acquiring the necessary machines, including a mixer, molder and slicer, as well as the construction of stones and the oven. A total of 12 youth and women (6 females and 6 males) were trained to make bread and doughnuts. Marketing and market research conducted by members also reached out to a population of about 200 households inclusive of shop owners.

SORAK together with trainees developed original products such as bread and doughnuts (various sizes, shapes, and set products) by adding the flavor of lemongrass essential oil. The developed products are sold at private homes, retail stores, restaurants, schools, wholesale stores, etc., and are making profits, albeit little by little. SORAK plans to strengthen the bakery inclusive of youth and women training in the first year and subsequently move to mobilize them to attain credit in the second year.

- **Project name:** Economic empowerment of girls, women and youth through micro credit driven entrepreneurship in Uganda
- **Implementation period:** 2020/12/1-2021/3/31
- **Location:** Republic of Uganda (Mubende Province)
- **Beneficiaries:** 150 young people (80 girls, 70 boys), 100 women (planned for 2 years)
- **Expenditure:** Approximately 500,000 yen loan (other costs covered by SORAK funds)



Kneading dough with a bread kneading machine



Spreading the dough flat



Cut dough before frying



Rolling into a donut shape



Frying donuts



Baked bread



Bread and donuts for sale



Marketing team selling bread and donuts



② Promotion of International Communication

1) Information sharing

The reports on the current situation of Uganda under the COVID-19 pandemic (September 23, 2020) and SORAK's contributions challenge under COVID-19 (January 31, 2021) were posted on FB and GBN's blog. In addition, GBN staff member Ms. Yokota, who had worked in Mozambique for nine years, introduces Mozambique and her experience as a series entitled the "Story of Mozambique". From here on, we

would like to continue activity report and information sharing through effectively using online and movie etc.

<LINK> click below link so that you can see the entire story.

- [【Staff Report】Situation about corona in Uganda](#)
- [ACTIONS by SORAK under COVID-19 among vulnerable communities](#)
- [Story of Mozambique](#)

2) Introduction of activities to students

In July 2020, GBN received an inquiry from university students of Yokohama City University, International College of Arts and Sciences, Department of Global Cooperation and Area Studies, regarding the GBN's project "Improvement of School Environment to Combat Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Challenges to Stop Adolescent Girls School Dropouts in Uganda." A zoom meeting was held thereafter to introduce this project as well as answer their questions. Japanese people's interest related to menstrual issue is increasing and we recently received some inquiries on it. We of course share our experience as well as welcome other's opinion and idea.

3) Events on the theme of international cooperation and multicultural coexistence

The international cooperation event, which was held as the Yokohama International Forum and International Festa until 2019, was held online in February 2021 as SDGs Yokohama CITY. Due to no current projects underway and being unable to appeal via live streaming from the site, GBN members contributed as participants instead as of an exhibitor to collect information for future endeavors. We truly appreciated and were able to learn about the possibilities of introducing activities and public relations using ICT. In the future, we would like to live-stream from local sites with online tools like Zoom or make opportunities of online communication between Japan and Local sites.