

Summary for Overseas Travel
WENDI 2018-2019

Name	Shoko Iwasaki
School	Kyoto University
Grade	Graduate school Master degree, Grede 1
Supervisor's name	Prof. Kaoru Sekiyama
Travel period	27 Feb 2019 - 17 Mar 2019
UN agencies / International organization visited	UNICEF Malawi/ UNHCR Malawi/ World Bank Vietnam
Theme of overseas travel	Influence of music activities for 6-7 year-old Malawi children on executive functions

Outline of the activities (4 pages including photos, figures, etc.)

(1) Global leadership

Several international organizations including UN agencies have contributed support to Malawi. Malawi is one of the poorest countries in the world . Malawi's population are rapidly increasing, however, the people of Malawi face health issues and the poor performance of agriculture which leads to food supply problems.

From an educational perspective, although elementary school education was made compulsory at an early stage, there are 100 to 200 children per teacher in one classroom. This means that the quality of education is not prepared for school age children. In addition, the repetition rate is still high. Therefore, preparation systems, like preschools are needed . Early childhood education and care is attracting attention worldwide because it is the most important entry point for building children's cognitive and social skills.

UNICEF and World Bank are also focusing on the impact of early childhood education on human life. They conduct programs for early childhood intervention.

From a global leadership perspective, it can be said that supporting early childhood development is essential.

Through visiting several international organizations, I have found that it is significantly important to know the regional people and their lifestyles. While keeping close to the opinions of people who have lived, it is necessary to find a method that can be solved, and to contribute research while finding out evidence that the method is appropriate. One of the most important skills is building a relationship of trust with regional people. This relationship of trust leads the ideal goal setting.

I became strongly aware of this perspective through this visiting opportunity.

(2) Scientific Significance

In our daily life, it has become easier to get knowledge about other countries' situations, including poor and developing countries. We can get a lot of data through international organizations and read the reports of the research that organizations are conducting. However, the quality of ideas through considering about my research is limited. Meeting, asking questions, and listening to regional people and foreign workers in Malawi gave me a new perspective on my research and future.

Visiting several international organizations, discussing my research, and listening to their opinions gave me an opportunity to rethink my research plan. Seeing the real situation was essential to my research.

(3) Originality/Universality

I visited six preschools, including kindergartens and nursery schools, and had interviews with several teachers. I observed children in action at several schools. I found out what they hadn't done yet and discussed which skills children needed to improve with the managers of the schools. It encouraged me to continue my research and discover a new vision for my research.

(4) Reasons and motivations for visiting UN agencies / International organizations

UNICEF in Malawi

UNICEF Malawi works to promote and protect the rights of children and women in Malawi. The program will continue its support to improve early childhood development from 2019 to 2023.

The main reason I visited UNICEF is that this agency supports the learning and stimulation of pre-school children in Community Based Child Care centers. My research is related to finding effective activities for children's cognitive development in Malawi. I will conduct research in the field of Community Based Child Care centers(CBC). UNICEF has been supporting CBC in its current program.

This visit gave me a chance to see the future: options I can try for my future internship, how I can apply, what I really want to do, etc. .

UNHCR in Malawi

I met an officer from UNHCR in Malawi. UNHCR in Malawi supports refugees in the area. I heard the story about how and why the officer joined UNHCR. It was a precious opportunity to know about his/her job. The main feedback I got from the meeting was that every officer who works for refugees is professional regardless of position.

World Bank in Vietnam

I got a chance to discuss how and why Vietnam has developed so rapidly and what hidden tips helped it to succeed. It was a really great opportunity to talk about the country's development from the perspective of early childhood education. I was able to get advice from an education specialist, which was to keep studying toward what I really want to do in the future.

I got a chance to visit several international organizations and several schools thanks to the WENDI fund. In conclusion, these visiting opportunities were great contributions to my future. I realized what I really want to do in the future, which includes my research and my future career. All of the officers I met gave me precious advice and their honest opinion about their jobs. This opportunity was precious because seeing and listening to people there give me an idea of what they really need. Even though I have not concluded what I need to do, this opportunity gave me many tips for my research and future career. This great chance opened a new window for me.

Research Field



Kabutu primary school
class room in Malawi

Ms. Joyce Ntaba
SOS Children's Village Malawi
Kindergarten Principal



Dr. Maxwell Nkhokwe
JICA Officer
Research Partner

**UN agency/ JICA
in Malawi**



The picture did not include both the entrance sign and me together...



**World Bank
in Vietnam**

