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UN Volunteer Hodaka Kosugi provided technical support to health workers to disinfect water using chlorine solutions for Ebola infection prevention and control in Ntoko District, Uganda.
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Leaving a lasting impact on Ebola preparedness and community health

As the sole water and sanitation specialist in UNICEF's field office in western Uganda, Hodaka Kosugi took on extraordinary responsibilities during his UN Volunteer assignment. He addressed leading causes of child mortality, in communities and refugee settlements, by improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Hodaka served through the Global Human Resource Development Programme for Peacebuilding and Development (HRD) of the Government of Japan.

In Uganda, thousands of children become extremely sick and at risk of death due to unequal access to safe drinking water and poor sanitation and hygiene. Diseases like diarrhea and pneumonia, which are preventable with safe water and sanitation, remain leading causes of child mortality.

In refugee settlements, access to water and sanitation has been deteriorating as the settlements come under increasing pressure due to the arrival of over 1.4m refugees from neighbouring countries. Uganda was at considerable risk of having an Ebola outbreak when the first case was detected in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in August 2018.

Hodaka commenced assignment with UNICEF in Uganda in April 2018 and served until December 2019. He provided technical support to local governments and partner organizations in western Uganda to develop WASH capacities in emergency (Ebola and refugee response) and development contexts. Hodaka also coordinated emergency responses to possible Ebola outbreaks in districts bordering with DRC and worked with other UN agencies to distribute emergency supplies to health facilities and schools to minimize contamination risk.

Ultimately, Hodaka set out to improve children's health and protection outcomes in Uganda by improving access to and use of safe drinking water, sanitation, educating on personal and environmental hygiene practices, as well as providing safe and protective environments for children in families, communities schools and health facilities.

“ I am immensely proud of the impact I was able to have through my assignment. I remain gratified and inspired by the results achieved and people's lives I have been able to change for the better. --Hodaka Kosugi, UN Volunteer WASH Specialist, Uganda

In four refugee settlements and host communities in western Uganda, Hodaka provided technical guidance to support the extension of a water transmission line and focused on sanitation, and hygiene promotion work.

Through connection of the water transmission line, 142,000 people in refugee settlements and host communities got access to safe water. To support the implementation of WASH in emergency response activities, Hodaka worked with district local governments, host communities, including hospitals and schools and other UN organizations.

"A core part of my work in hygiene promotion was to design, implement, monitor and evaluate the Community-Led Total Sanitation programme. This seeks to eliminate open defecation in 18 districts, and succeeded in getting 492 villages open defecation free status in the western and central region alone," Hodaka shares.

UNICEF is promoting gender equality through WASH initiatives in schools. Hodaka's efforts bolstered menstruation hygiene management education and included the construction of washrooms for girls. "I led a menstruation hygiene management programme in western

Uganda in 2018 and 2019. In 50 schools, we educated over 20,000 students, around 10,000 of whom were boys. We also reached 350 teachers and parents on menstruation hygiene issues. The project supported the construction of female washrooms using locally-available materials and promoted reusable sanitary pads," Hodaka says.

With regards to Ebola preparedness, Hodaka designed an Infection Prevention and Control training programme for frontline health workers and teachers and helped trainers from 15 Ebola high-risk districts conduct the training. In total, 1,076 frontline health workers and 906 teachers were trained.

He also assessed WASH situations in health facilities and points of entry in 15 Ebola high-risk districts bordering the DRC, within two months after the outbreak in the country and coordinated 12 mass distributions of emergency supplies.

Hodaka speaks highly of his assignment, despite having some challenging times. "I sometimes felt overwhelmed with a lot of pressure and responsibility as a solo WASH officer in the field office, especially when the Ebola virus disease outbreak started in the DRC in August 2018. I was able to get through it with support from my UNICEF colleagues including my supervisor. I feel grateful to the UNV programme and UNICEF colleagues for giving me this great opportunity," Hodaka reflects.

Hodaka's assignment contributed to SDG6, ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, and SDG3, good health and wellbeing.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Fp4gTMiEX8&t=81s>



<https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/open-secret-high-latrines-coverage-kamwenge>



<https://www.unv.org/unv-funding-partners/unv-and-japan-partnering-human-resource-development-peacebuilding>



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Sustainable Development Goal: **SDG 3: Good health and well-being** **SDG 5: Gender equality**
SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals