

International Affairs Department

Dear friends,

How are you?

This edition is already my seventh newsletter as a JICA expert. I will tell you about a training program and JBAV Matsuri, or Japan Festival in Vietnam.

1. TRAINING PROGRAM: SEWERAGE MASTER PLAN

From October 23 to 27, the training program for the sewerage master plan was held in College of Urban Works Construction (CUWC) in the suburb of Hanoi.

The details are as follows.

Day 1: Registration and handout distribution started in the afternoon. At first, I wondered why there was no training class on the first day, but later I understood it is a consideration for some trainees who come from far to attend the program, and this schedule is typical in Vietnam.



Photo 1: Mr. Mai Thi Lien Huong delivering an opening address

Day 2: Following the opening address by Dr. Mai Thi Lien Huong, Director General of the Ministry of Construction (MOC) of Vietnam (Photo 1), there were two lectures: "Sewage works overview" by MSc. Tran Thi Thao Huong of section chief and "Structure of sewerage and drainage master plan" by Dr. Do Thuan An of Vietnam Water, Sanitation, and Environment (VIWASE.) They had a discussion and Q&A sessions after the lectures.

Day 3: The program started with "Basics of sewer network planning" by Dr. Do Thuan An. "Presentation of new technologies" by Mr. Tamaki Mori of JICA expert followed. After that, the rest of the "Basics of sewer network planning" and the discussions and Q&A sessions followed.



Photo 2: General discussion

DAY 4: Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Duong of MOC lectured about the "Governmental decree No.16: The management and use of official development assistance (ODA)." Mr. Takeki Kajiura from Nippon Koei spoke about the "Structure of feasibility study," after which discussions and Q&A followed.

Dr. Vu Thi Hoai An mainly hosted the discussions and Q&A sessions for three days from CUWC (another Dr. An). She, who is used to having lectures daily, succeeded in encouraging trainees to join the discussions.

Day 5: After the "General Discussion" (Photo 2), they had a closing ceremony with receiving a completion certificate. Forty-eight from Northern provinces, including Son La, Hoa Binh, Ninh Binh, and Nam Dinh, registered for the training program, and forty were finally certified.

The training program was planned and managed mainly by Mr. Mori, a JICA expert. People spent a lot of time for preparation, including subject setting, making textbooks, and participant recruitment to provide the program while having many discussions with the Vietnamese side. From now on, we will analyze a questionnaire of lecturers and trainees to reflect on it in our next program.

2. JAPAN FESTIVAL IN VIETNAM

On October 29, the Japan Business Association in Vietnam (JBAV) held Japan Festival as JBAV Matsuri 2017 in the Japanese school of Hanoi.

When I arrived at the school around 11 a.m., when the Festival was scheduled to start, people had already made a long queue (Photo 3), which surprised me.



Photo 3: Long queue at the festival gate

The Festival consisted of stage performances and carnival booths. I happened to see Ambassador Umeda making an opening speech on the main stage on the school grounds (Photo 4). After that, kindergarten children, a Hula Dance club, and a hip-hop group performed to entertain their families and friends.



Photo 4: Ambassador Umeda making an opening speech

The audience sitting on the grass took a picture or video of these happy performers. They all looked a lot of fun.

Many carnival booths were on the school ground, and some stalls were in the classroom buildings. JAV Matsuri is an exclusive festival for pre-sale ticket holders. The ticket with an admission fee of 250 thousand VND (about 1,250 yen) looked somewhat expensive, but it also included five choices of the main meal, such as octopus' balls

and fried chicken, and had snacks (corn dog and broiled sweet corn.) So, it might have been reasonable.

I finished all my food while watching the stage performance before lunchtime to avoid the crowds. Since my stomach had enough room, I spent the beautiful afternoon eating and relaxing: I "captured" red bean bread, cream puffs, rice cakes, soybean milk, and finally, beer.