

International Affairs Department

Dear friends,

In my 12th newsletter as a JICA expert, I will report a seminar of WOW TO Japan Project and Vietnam's remarkable performance at the AFC U23 championship 2018 China.

1. WOW TO JAPAN SEMINAR IN VIETNAM

Do you know "WOW TO JAPAN Project"?

"WOW TO JAPAN" or "Wonder of Wastewater Technology of Japan" is a project that Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transportation, and Tourism (MLIT) of Japan started in 2017 to promote globalization of Japanese wastewater technologies. In the project, demonstrations are implemented in the promising regions to evaluate the performance and applicability of the technologies and encourage their adoption in the area.

I'm proud that WOW TO JAPAN Project picked Ho Chi Minh City as its first demonstration field.

The first demonstration technology is "Deformed sewer retrofit using the trenchless method" that is long, seemingly complicated name. The handout I have says the technology combines spiral hard vinyl chloride strip to form a new sewer inside an existing one.

A consortium of Sekisui Chemical Co., Ltd. and Japan Sewage Works Agency (JS) implements the demonstration. The two parties had carried out experiments or technical seminar in Vietnam since the project adopted the technology.

In March, I made a requested presentation about JICA project in the technical seminar held in Ho Chi Minh (Photo 1.)

In my presentation, I talked about the wastewater situation of Vietnam, a need of the project I work for, and the project summary and its principal activities (training, project implementation support, R&D.) I promoted an audience to join the training program scheduled in southern Vietnam including Ho Chi Minh City.



Photo 1: My presentation

The seminar delivered three other presentations that are "The current situation of wastewater and sewer in Ho Chi Minh City - a need of sewer retrofit -", "A significance of the project from the human resource development" and "Deformed sewer retrofit using the trenchless method."



Photo 2: Demonstration

After the seminar, we joined an outdoor demonstration of "Deformed sewer retrofit using the trenchless method." In the demonstration, spiral hard vinyl chloride strip called "profile" was connected to form a new pipe inside an existing sewer using the actual equipment (Photo 2). Many seminar participants were looking at the presentation intently under bright sunshine like early

summer, which impressed me.

2. MARVELOUS VIETNAM U23 FOOTBALL TEAM

Now, I talk about the AFC U23 Championship 2018 China though it was a while ago.

Soccer is popular enough in Vietnam that the country has a professional league.

In January, the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) held U23 Championship 2018 in China. Vietnam proceeded to the finals by surviving the group stage as runners-up. Finally, the team won the second place (the champion was Uzbekistan) after winning penalty shoot-out each of quarter-final and semi-final, against Iraq and Qatar, respectively.

Some Vietnamese talked about the breakthrough of their national team when it passed group stage, and many people became focusing on U23 when it proceeded to the semi-final.

The semi-final game started at 3.p.m. local time in Vietnam. Though it was a weekday, I knew many people watch the game on TV ignoring their work because I sometimes heard their cheers from outside. After working, I tried to call a taxi to go home, but there was no answer. Yes, taxi drivers were no exception. They watched the game somewhere else, too. I finally went back in another way through a quiet road which usually has heavy traffic. It looked to me to be evident that every driver including taxi watched TV at that time. When I arrived at my apartment, I heard people's yells right in the middle of the penalty shoot-out. After a little silence, people made a greater cheer showing their win over Qatar (Photo 3). The historic victory inspired enthusiasm in the whole country, especially in major cities. Hundreds of motorbikes thronged around streets with waving Vietnamese flags and shouting "Viva, Vietnam!" Before the final, the embassy of Japan in Vietnam provided an e-mail alert to prepare for unexpected events. The final against Uzbekistan was on Saturday. Some factories that operate on Saturdays decided temporary closing of the afternoon. Though I had some awareness of Vietnamese' love for soccer, such excitement was beyond my imagination. I felt I saw a part of their patriotism.



Photo 3: Excitement after semi-final