

**Report on the Dispatch to Botswana and South Africa:
Exploring the Potential of Scientific Research (S)**

Koji Hayashi
Specially Appointed Research Fellow
The Center for African Area Studies
Kyoto University

From September 24 to October 2, 2022, I visited to the Republic of South Africa and the Republic of Botswana. It was the first visit to both countries for me, I accompanied the project representative, Prof. Takada, and held meetings mainly with researchers at the University of Botswana in Gaborone, the capital of Botswana.



Photo 1: University of Botswana. A large, well-equipped, and beautiful campus.

At the University of Botswana, Prof. Takada gave a detailed explanation of the concept while introducing the project to our counterpart, Associate Professor Maitseo M. M. Bolaane of the Faculty of Humanities. We also met with Mr. Leema A. Hiri of the San Research Center,

Dr. Roy Tapera, Dr. Patience N. Erick, and Dr. Tshephang Tumoyagae of the Faculty of Health Sciences, and Dr. Oleosi Mogametsi Ntshebe of the Faculty of Social Sciences, among others, and gave a presentation on the project's concept. The meetings focused on the position of local researchers on the San as African hunter-gatherers, which is of interest to me, and on the state of sanitation and hygiene in Botswana.

At the Embassy of Japan in Botswana, we received information on the Corona Pandemic and the current situation in Botswana from Counselor Mr. Murai and other staff members, and were able to deepen our understanding of the general perception of hunter-gatherers (San) in Botswana, based on the project overview. After that, we visited the JICA Botswana Office, where we received a detailed explanation of JICA's efforts in Botswana from Mr. Eguchi, the Director of the Botswana Office, and other staff members, obtained information on the situation in the education sector, particularly in relation to the project, including the tendency in Botswana to incorporate local languages into primary education. The participants also learned about the situation in the field of education related to this project.



Photo 2: View from the building housing the JICA Botswana office

At the Botswana National Museum & Art Gallery, we viewed paintings, objects, and artifacts with San motifs. It was interesting to see how San is represented in Botswana in the field of crafts and arts as well as education.



Photo 3: At the entrance of the Botswana National Museum & Art Gallery, mopane worm, a widely consumed and economically important product in Southern Africa including Botswana, was introduced.

During my stay in Botswana, I was accompanied by Prof. Takada at various places, and it was fortuitous that I was able to ask him directly for all kinds of information on Botswana, including information on the accumulation of research in Botswana and the laboratories he visited. However, due to the limited time spent in Botswana, I regret that I was not able to have sufficient discussions and that we could not find a clear vision for my future involvement in the project in Botswana. I would like to continue our efforts to make the best use of my own areas of expertise while taking into account the characteristics of the project, which is comparative research in the three countries.

*The reporter went through Johannesburg (South Africa) on both return trips, and would like

to share the experience of crossing the border with Botswana and traveling by long-distance bus (return trip) with graduate students and others involved in the project about South Africa, where security is a matter of concern.