

Round table meeting held at the Japan Society for Afrasian Studies (JSAS) Annual Conference

On Saturday, 9 July 2022, as a special session of the Japan Society for Afrasian Studies (JSAS) annual conference (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), a round table meeting was held on the research project "Exploration of Practical Wisdom and Resilience Overcoming Downside Risk - Collecting grassroots voices in Africa under COVID-19".

At the beginning of the round table, Dr. Christian Otchia (Associate Professor, Nagoya University), a vital member of this research project, provided basic information on the research background, purpose, members, research countries, methods, and grant. Notably, he pointed out that this research focuses on how some of the most well-intentioned efforts to reduce identified risks can increase other risks.

Participants consented to the importance of such research and engaged in a lively discussion afterward. The main comments include how unmentioned factors such as habits, community function, and alternative medicine may affect local people's perception of risk. Participants also had questions from different perspectives, including the critical analysis of risk, the relationship between 'practical wisdom' and 'traditional knowledge,' the rationale for government to adopt lockdown policies, and so on.

As a response, Dr. Otchia stated that the project needs to strive to understand the local people's risk perceptions from their narrative, based on a comprehensive understanding of each country's livelihoods and political environment. He also expressed his sincere welcome to the participation of researchers from diverse backgrounds.

The round table ended with the presenters' gratitude and the participants' high expectations.

(Report by Muyun Wang, Research Fellow, The University of Tokyo)

