

Chapter 1 Abstract of Evaluation

1. Context and Goals of Evaluation of Volunteer Operations

JICA has been working on development of the evaluation methodology that is appropriate for the characteristics and features of our operations after we have become an Independent Administrative Institution in 2003 to make more systematic evaluations for our volunteer operations. The objectives of our volunteer operations are: 1. “Contribution to development/recovery of economy and society in developing countries/regions;” 2. “Close friendship and mutual understanding between developing countries/regions and Japan;” and 3. “Utilization of volunteer experience in Japanese society.” With these three viewpoints, we finalized the evaluation of our operations and the evaluation of the JOCV operations that officially started in 2004.

The goals of this evaluation task¹ are to give people feedback about the lessons and the suggestions obtained during the course of the evaluation process by assessing the achievement of the objectives of the JOCV operations executed by JICA, and to keep a wide public informed of the utility of the operation.

2. Framework of Evaluation Survey

(1) Viewpoints of Evaluations

In this evaluation, we will analyze the effectiveness of the volunteer operations and goal achievement levels, following the viewpoints stated in the above section “1. Context and Goals of Evaluation of Volunteer Operations;” “Contribution to development/recovery of economy and society in developing countries/regions” (Viewpoint I), “close friendship and mutual understanding between developing countries/regions and Japan” (Viewpoint II), and “utilization of volunteer experience in Japanese society” (Viewpoint III), and we will attempt to draw lessons for developing operational strategies in the future and for improving JICA’s supporting structure for volunteers. The following are the perspectives of evaluations based on each viewpoint.

¹ The viewpoints and the methods of evaluation are explained in the following sections, but this evaluation task is not intended for evaluating volunteers’ individual activities.

1) Viewpoint I: “Contribution to Development/Recovery of Economy and Society in Developing Countries/Regions”

The items to be evaluated are set as “demands for foreign volunteers in target countries” and “effect of cooperation of volunteers,” and these are evaluated using the criteria of “commitment to developmental tasks/important areas of country-specific operation plans” and “goal achievement levels settled with recipient organizations.” Considering the characteristics of volunteer operations, “validity” is mainly evaluated for the former criterion and “effectiveness” and “impact” are evaluated for the latter.

2) Viewpoint II: “Close Friendship & Mutual Understanding between Developing Countries/Regions and Japan”

The items to be evaluated are set as “enhancement of people’s understanding about Japan in target countries” and “enhancement of people’s understanding about the target countries in Japan,” and the former is evaluated using the criterion of “acknowledgement of presence of volunteers and that of Japan at the host organization and among locals” and the latter is evaluated using the criteria of “improvement of volunteers’ understanding of the country in which they work” and “awareness of the recipient of information (family left at home, organization in Japan they belong to) sent by volunteers.”

3) Viewpoint III: “Utilization of Volunteer Experience in Japanese Society”

The items to be evaluated are set as “utilization of volunteer experience in Japanese society,” and two criteria for evaluation are “level of contribution to society offered by volunteers who returned (level of direct contribution) and “level of volunteers’ participation in local society after returning (level of indirect contribution.”

(2) Evaluation System Chart

In this evaluation survey, items and criteria for evaluation are assigned for three evaluation viewpoints (operational goals) as indicated in the attached document 1 “Evaluation System Chart,” and the results of survey for each viewpoint are considered to be the reasons for supporting the evaluation.

(3) Evaluation Methodology and Evaluation Cycle

We have conducted separate case study surveys in addition to the various

questionnaire surveys presented in the following table “3. Survey Methods.” One evaluation cycle of a volunteer operation consists of three years, as is the normal case for a medium-term plan.

3. Survey Methods

For evaluation of volunteer operations, several types of questionnaires are used as follows:

Form	Frequency	Time	Administrator	Survey Method
#1 Coherence in conducted activities with country-specific operation plans	Every 3 years	Late Nov – late Jan of the last year of mid-term plan	Overseas office	Questionnaire
#2 Questionnaire survey at aided organizations	Every 3 years	Late Nov – late Jan of the last year of mid-term plan	Overseas office	Questionnaire or fact-finding
#3 Questionnaire survey for volunteers	Once in a term, once in a cycle	At the end of volunteer term	Overseas office	Questionnaire
#4 Questionnaire survey at the recipient organization	Once in a term, once in a cycle	Starting 3 months prior to end of volunteer term	Overseas office	Questionnaire or fact-finding
#5 Questionnaire survey for beneficiaries	Once in a term, once in a cycle	Starting 3 months prior to end of volunteer term	Overseas office	Questionnaire or fact-finding
#6 Questionnaire survey for people concerned with volunteering in Japan	Every 3 years	Late Jun – late Sep of the 2nd year of mid-term plan	JOCV Office	Questionnaire
#7 Questionnaire survey for volunteers who returned 2 years ago	Every 3 years	Early Oct – late Feb every year Early Apr – mid Sep of 1st year of mid-term plan	JOCV Office	Questionnaire
#8 Questionnaire survey for volunteers who returned 5 to 7 years ago	Every 3 years	Early Oct – late Feb every year Early Apr – mid Sep of 1st year of mid-term plan	JOCV Office	Questionnaire
#9 Questionnaire survey for the general public (Internet survey)	Every 3 years	Early Apr – mid Sep of 3rd year of mid-term plan	JOCV Office	Questionnaire for about 2,000 participants (random sample)

Chapter 2 Summary of Survey Result

The survey results are organized in relation to the three evaluation viewpoints and presented in the following sections.

1. Viewpoint I: Contribution to Development/Recovery of Economy and Society in Developing Countries/Regions

(1) Demands for Foreign Volunteers in Target Countries

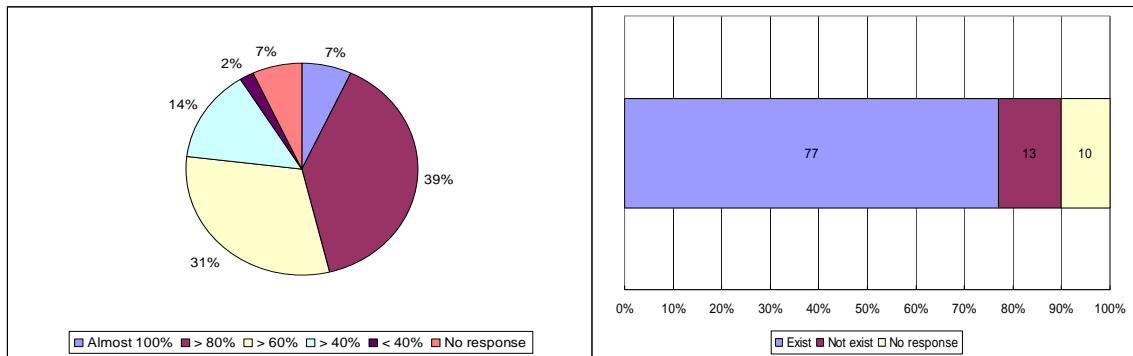


Figure 1: (Left) Form #1 shows “coherence”, (Right) Form #2 shows “coherence”

(2) Effect of Volunteers’ Cooperation

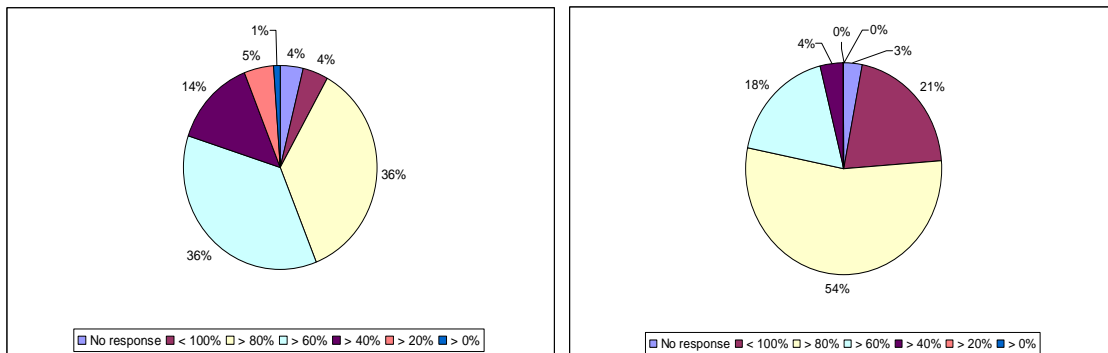


Figure 1: (Left) Form #3 shows “achievement”, (Right) Form #4 shows “achievement”

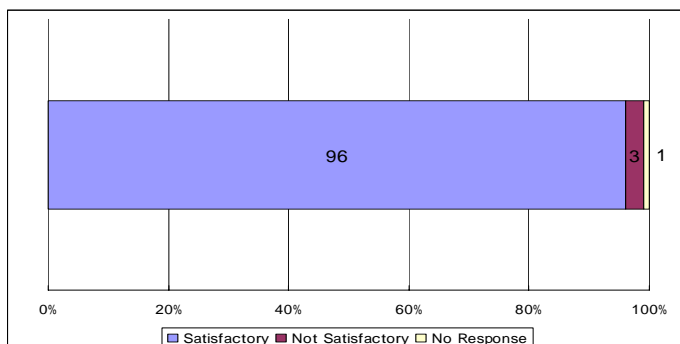


Figure 2: Form #5 shows “Satisfaction”

2. Viewpoint II: Close Friendship & Mutual Understanding between Developing Countries/Regions and Japan

(1) Enhancement of People's Understanding of Japan in Target Countries

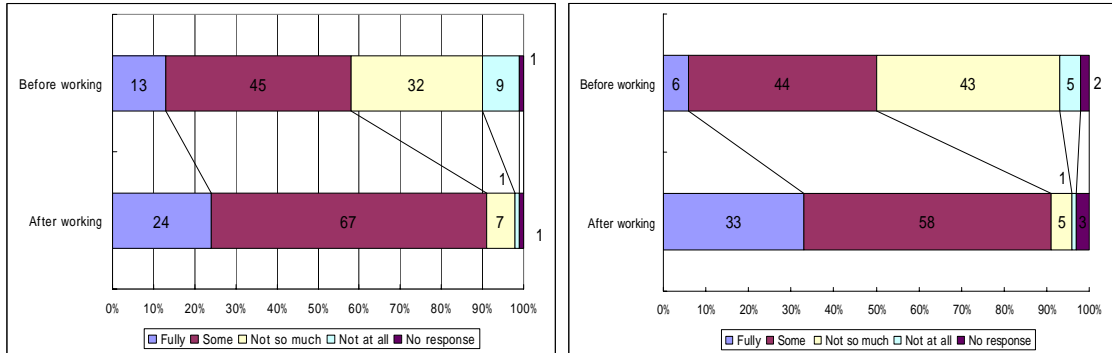


Figure 3: (Left) Form #3 shows “Enhancement of understanding (in target countries),” (Right) Form #4 shows “Enhancement of understanding”

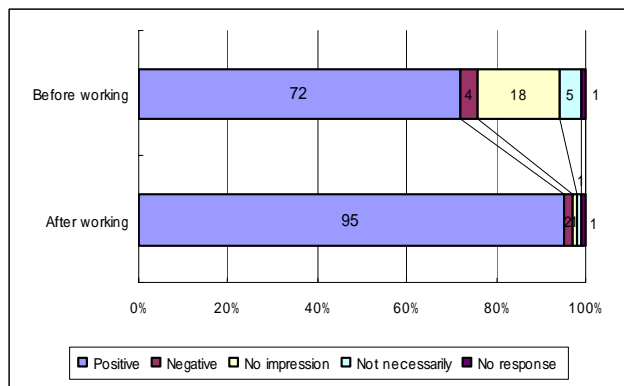


Figure 4: Form #5 shows “Change in impression towards Japan”

(2) Enhancement of People's Understanding of Target Countries in Japan

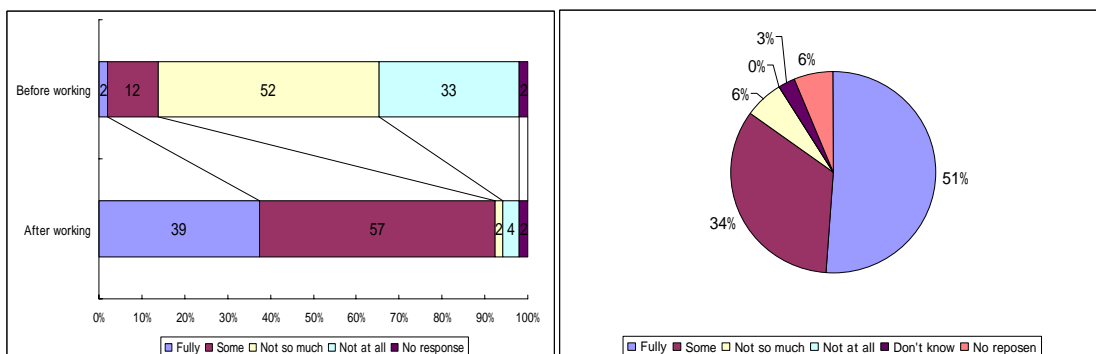


Figure 5: (Left) Form #3 shows “Enhancement of understanding,” (Right) Form #4 shows

“Enhancement of understanding”

3. Viewpoint III: Utilization of Volunteer Experience in Japanese Society

(1) Utilization of Volunteer Experience in Society

1) Direct Contribution

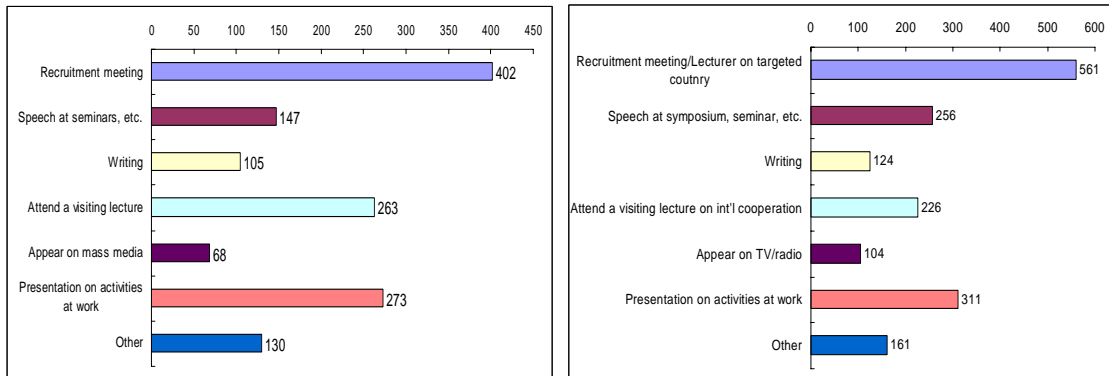


Figure 6: (Left) Form #7 shows “content of contribution,” (Right) Form #8 shows “content of contribution”

2) Indirect Contribution

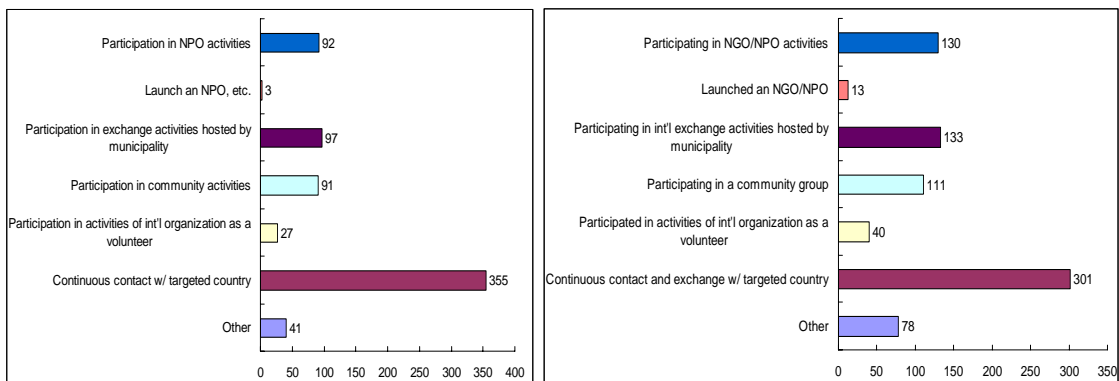


Figure 7: (Left) Form #7 shows “content of contribution,” (Right) Form #8 shows “content of contribution”

3) Will for Contribution Activities

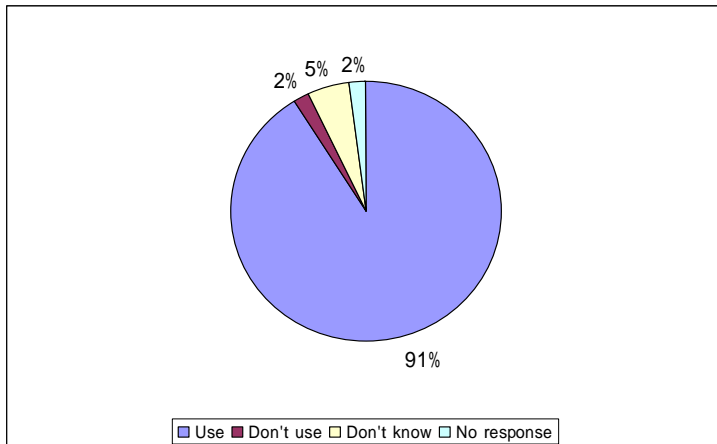


Figure 8: Form #3 shows “utilization of experience”

Chapter 3 Considerations and Suggestions for Evaluation in Relation to Each Viewpoint

The following considerations and suggestions have been extrapolated from the surveys for evaluations on volunteer operations.

1. Considerations

(1) Viewpoint I: Contribution to Development/Recovery of Economy and Society in Developing Countries/Regions

We have concluded that the operation of dispatching volunteers was quite successful as planned, although about 30% of overseas offices said that they could not dispatch volunteers as planned. Some of the reasons may have included: 1. Absence of a qualified person; 2. Timing and scheduling issues; 3. Applicants were unavailable for the vacancies. In the field of “Education and Culture,” applicants’ lack of practical experiences and poor language proficiency are assumed to be the reason for not being able to dispatch volunteers, and in the field of “Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries,” the social fact that the population in these industries is decreasing can be affecting our operations. Foreign assistance is desperately needed in these fields (No.1 “Education and Culture,” No.2 “Healthcare,” No.3 “Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery”) in countries where volunteers are dispatched, and these fields coincide with the fields of activities (No1. “Education and Culture,” No.2 “Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries,” No.3 “Healthcare”) in which volunteers tend to be highly evaluated by

the organizations they work with. For the fact that there are not enough applicants and dispatched volunteers or that the technical expertise of volunteers is insufficient for the local requirements, we need to make long-term efforts with a wide view such as analysis of problems, discussions on how to support the applicants and how to locate and recruit them. In the future, to address the timing problem in dispatching volunteers, we will need to establish a system to process the sequence of recruitment, screening, training, and dispatching swiftly.

As a result of our survey for the recipient organizations and the beneficiaries, more than 90% of the organizations that accepted the volunteers indicated they were satisfied with the outcome of the Japanese volunteer operation; therefore our operation seems to be relatively successful considering the fact that 60% were satisfied with the activities conducted by other supporting organizations. In addition, a very valuable fact is that 70% of the recipient organizations said the volunteers completed more than 80% of their activities as planned. One of the reasons for the high evaluation is that the volunteers mixed well in the local community adapting to their life and culture and that people felt sympathy with their attitude towards the volunteer work since the volunteers respected the local demands. The appropriate attitude of volunteers that prioritizes return to the local community and technology transfer to local people is highly evaluated.

On the other hand, volunteers' self evaluation in relation to the achievement level of their activities is low, with only 30% indicating that their achievement level reached 80% or more. One of the reasons may be that the volunteers are dissatisfied with their technology or there may be a gap in awareness in relation to the achievement levels between the recipient organization and the volunteers. This is supported by the answer to the question; "Will the same effect and activities remain after the volunteers go back to Japan?" 70% of the recipient organizations said, "We will continue in the future," while only about 20% of volunteers answered so. Such a gap may be considered as the outcome of volunteers' modesty as they remain strict with themselves without falling into complacency, and it shows the healthiness of volunteer activities. However, it can be a problem if the outcome achievable with the volunteers' technical level is hindered by the problems of the administrator (e.g. insufficient investigation prior to dispatch, ambiguity of the plan, immature support system, etc.). It is required to find a form or a method of activities that bridge the awareness of both parties.

For the achievement level of activity goals, 40% of the volunteers who consented to the activity goals with the recipient organizations in the beginning of the term indicated 80% or more of achievement, while the number of volunteers who did not consent to the goals indicating such level of achievement remained 20%. Consequently, it can be concluded that the communication of volunteers with recipient organizations is important in the early stages in order to obtain an expected effect for a volunteer activity. The reasons for not agreeing were: 1. The goals and the content of the activity were not clear; 2. The recipient organization was not cooperative; and 3. There was a gap between the content of the activity and the demands of the recipient organization.

It is important to understand the demands of the recipient organization as specifically as possible in the investigation stages since volunteer activities may differ greatly depending on the content of their demands. The proportion of volunteers who said that the activities matched with their technology corresponds with that of the ones who consented to the activity goals with the recipient organization; and this highlights the importance of the volunteer activities. Another factor contributing to the high achievement level is the relationships with local people and the adaptation to local culture and customs, which occupy the top ranking, thus it is concluded that the qualifications of the volunteers are also important factors.

(2) Viewpoint II: Close Friendship & Mutual Understanding between Developing Countries/Regions and Japan

Knowledge of Japan and Japanese people by the recipient organizations and the beneficiary is drastically enhanced after the dispatch of volunteers, and the response “positive impression” increased more than two-fold after their deployment. It was confirmed that the impressions of Japan and Japanese people invariably improved as a result of volunteers’ presence and activities. Local people were impressed with Japanese people’s sense of value and behavior patterns, such as “attitude and process at work,” “respect of others,” “effort to merge with other cultures,” etc. and it is a valuable point that their understanding extends as far as Japanese people’s nature. Although there is a negative evaluation such as “problems with language and communication,” Japanese people are given high evaluations by the volunteers, the NGOs, and other foreign-aid organizations of other countries. It seems that Japanese people are suitable for volunteer activities offering a high potential for a wide range of friendly relationships and mutual understanding.

The fact that more than 90% of volunteers evaluated themselves as having deepened the understanding of the country is the result of positive practice of the basic attitudes that volunteers should merge with the local community, which may also be a good reflection of the flexibility and the ability of Japanese people to assimilate into a foreign life culture. The result that volunteers participated in the exchange activities with local people in the country, outside their original missions, was as high as 90% and revealed the high motivation for exchange activities. As stated earlier, local people are giving volunteers high evaluations. The volunteer operations contribute to the promotion of exchange between developing countries and Japan, and it is obvious that mutual understanding has been promoted at a faster rate than expected even if we only evaluate the past two year.

About 70% of the volunteers' families and staff remained behind in Japan said that their understanding about the country was enhanced, and the result was very positive in respect of the promotion of understanding about the developing countries in Japan. Considering the survey results indicating interest, understanding, and the practical exchange were all enhanced for volunteers' families and other staff, expansion of volunteer operations may have the potential of contributing further to understanding the developing countries and to active exchanges with them for Japanese people as an added bonus. In the future, it is important to formulate methods and systems for recruiting those who are interested in the developing countries for the purpose of letting them participate in activities for friendly relationships and mutual understanding.

(3) Viewpoint III: Utilization of Volunteer Experience in Japanese Society

Nearly 90% of the volunteers are engaged in the activities of presenting the works of international cooperation and the situations of developing countries when they come back to Japan. More than 90% of them feel that their activities have influenced society while promoting understanding and recognition of the utility of international understanding, cooperation, and volunteer activities for the general public. In addition, more than 80% of the general public is aware of necessity and utility of volunteer operations, thus the demand for their social contribution should further increase in the future. It is also important to have a follow-up system in place for the returning volunteers on the initiative of operation administrator, such as JICA's visiting lectures, etc. as an opportunity for reporting the experiences of volunteer activities. Considering story-telling of

volunteers' experience as a form of social contribution when they return to Japan, it is also necessary to think about effective ways to improve presentation skills in order to obtain a more effective outcome. The fact that more than half of the volunteers participate in community activities when they return to Japan can be evaluated as that their mentality changed positively after the participation in the volunteer operations. In the future, it is necessary to investigate in what form their experience as volunteers is utilized in order to assess the outcome of their social contribution.

Social contribution activities of volunteers who have returned to Japan are evaluated fairly effectively, but only about 50% of the general public are aware their activities. One of the important future issues to be discussed is how we can improve the recognition of their activities for the purpose of promoting the social contribution activities of these volunteers. It has been proven that the most popular media for recognition of volunteer operations are mostly TV and magazines. We need to take into consideration the options of having their activities broadcast on mass media and to publicize their writings on their volunteer experiences through mass media widely into the society.

2 Suggestions

(1) Viewpoint I: Contribution to Development/Recovery of Economy and Society in Developing Countries/Regions

JICA's contribution to the developing countries rests on the premise that we send volunteers who meet the needs of these countries. While the programs mostly follow the country-specific operation plans, we found out a new issue that the levels of volunteers' satisfaction should be enhanced.

An appropriate environment is required for enhancing the range of personnel and for securing the talent in the field of international cooperation in order to meet with the exigencies of the target country. In addition, it is necessary to clearly specify the purpose of the volunteer activity and inform the applicants of its significance at the time of public recruitment, while the information about the status of applications and selection should be shared with the recipient organizations to be incorporated into the work plan. For the professional areas with only a few applicants, some creativity may be required to arrange their request by obtaining other professional areas with more facility in recruiting or dividing the request into several areas. For certain requests, it may be necessary to clarify the technical skills, language proficiency, coordination

skills, communication skills, and other skills required for it and discuss the method of securing proper personnel.

In order to attain such an environment mentioned above, the role of the volunteers who have returned home is important because they know the developing country where they spent time and they have valuable information about the knowledge and technologies required there. With a network of valuable talents and an environment where the information of volunteers' experiences are easily available, it is possible to find the talents that meet the needs and then secure these people. In addition, future senior overseas volunteers can be recruited through this network relatively easily. In relation to this, partnership with other organizations is also beneficial for recruiting people. There are more ideas such as recruiting the talented personnel from other organizations related to the professional areas with higher demand, training the participants in a training system created by JICA in cooperation with other organizations, supporting the close partnership between the volunteers who returned and other organizations, etc.

It is important for JICA overseas offices to confirm the situation with each recipient organization in the government office concerned, prior to dispatching volunteers and discuss further the details of activities; the data sheet created by the overseas office needs to be reviewed even more closely. For some professions, the local needs may need to be further clarified. The specific information on the knowledge and the technologies that the recipient organizations require facilitates the decision for the applicants and their motivation for participation is enhanced.

To address the needs of the target country, it is necessary to support the activity of collecting the technical information that meets their demands before the trainees start the training sessions prior to departure. For that purpose, technical advisors with ample knowledge of the activities in the country are very important. For the support of trainees by the technical advisors, the internet bulletin board is used since it is also possible for other trainees to obtain the information about various cases.

(2) Viewpoint II: Close Friendship & Mutual Understanding between Developing Countries/Regions and Japan

Further research is required on the content and the practice methods for lectures and others for the purpose of furnishing the pre-departure training with better content that provides volunteers with a chance to acquire higher

qualifications. It is also important to provide volunteer candidates with the information about the types of volunteers in demand in the target countries. Our position for the volunteer activities based on the mutual understanding with local people is highly evaluated and we believe that it should be maintained in terms of extending the outcomes of our volunteer operations.

(3) Viewpoint III: Utilization of Volunteer Experience in Japanese Society

Emphasis should be placed on understanding the meaning of social contribution activities in a broad sense. It is important to make people aware of the use of a variety of methods to transmit their information, not simply the opportunity for a report session, a speech, etc. We believe that it is effective to discuss a method of transmitting the information in course of cooperation or alliance with the operation administrators.

In relation to the activities of disseminating the knowledge and the experience obtained in the country, further development can be expected not only in the school education but also in the universities or other research institutes, NGOs, NPOs, and municipal groups with global activities. Firstly, in the research institutes of universities or other organizations, it is necessary to support the creation of an environment suitable for academic researches such as a practical examination of international cooperation and social development. For community groups such as NGOs and NPOs, it may be necessary to support the activities that may lead to providing opportunities to discuss the technical cooperation conducted in one developing county as an issue of global society with people in the community. Activities of social contribution in a municipal international group can be an opportunity to publicize volunteers' experience to the general public, so it will be necessary to create opportunities for such activities in cooperation with the local organizations and networks of volunteer alumni.

Currently, there are some opportunities to elucidate the social contribution in the pre-departure training and the sessions when they return, but we believe that an opportunity to acquire such awareness is necessary during the mission itself. For that purpose, it may be effective to offer pre-departure training on the method of activities for social contribution in the overseas office prior to returning to Japan.

Evaluation System Chart

