

JICA RWANDA News

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“JICA Remains Operational & Rwanda is Developing despite the Pandemic” Says, JICA Chief Representative

In an interview to JICA News, Chief Representative of JICA Rwanda Office, Mr. Shin Maruo said despite the novel coronavirus, the optimism he shares with the entire office staff keeps it operational. Shin Maruo added that various JICA projects remain active and uses the newly learned approaches during the ongoing pandemic to impact Rwanda and the World. As a note to the development of Rwanda, he said that Rwanda is able to transform without losing its cultural identity as Japan did.



Mr. Shin Maruo, the Chief Representative of JICA Rwanda Office

Mr. Maruo expressed his assurance as he was speaking on the state of JICA operations in Rwanda “*Though Japanese experts and volunteers temporarily went back to Japan and their activities on field stopped, most of them work remotely from Japan hand in hand with Rwandan personnel in the country. Our staff continue to work either at the office or from home in Kigali or in Japan remotely. We did not stop any activities in our operations but rather we developed new approaches of working which combines remote working and field operations. We reaffirmed the importance of Rwandan counterpart personnel and office staff members in these months to continue our interventions in the country. He illustrated it stating that even “The grant aid project on Rwamagana Irrigation Scheme development is ongoing, and ahead of the*

construction schedule even under this difficult situation.”

In relation to difficulties encountered by both local (field and office) and remote staff and experts, Mr. Maruo said, “*There could be some delay of the work and some difficulties in communication but we managed to continue to contribute to the development and we are learning on how we can effectively implement our activities.”* He also added that the experience of working remotely was an eye opening one since it has triggered new approaches that will lead to an improved new normal when the pandemic is over. He said that JICA and any other institutions should see the pandemic as an opportunity since overcoming the difficulty will result in readiness for the new normal. “*COVID19 period is a time to learn lessons that can*

be utilized for improving our operations innovatively after the pandemic. Through industrial revolution era, some of the works done by humans were taken over by machines but more job opportunities were created in manufacturing industries. We are expecting the similar trends; some opportunities might be decreased on one side, while new opportunities will be increased on another side. Adapting to change requires relevant skills for readiness”

Concerning the new normal at JICA and the future of cooperation, he said that before the pandemic people tended to rely more on the presence of people. He explained that physical presence is necessary but the pandemic has revealed that it is not compulsory. “*No one expected the chain of virtual meetings but through them, we have learnt that knowledge and experience*

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could be shared much wider. This generates greater impact than in the past since now. For example, there is no limited number of participants for training provided by trainers in Japan or in third countries.”

He compared the remote working with old days when training participants were the only reliable source of the knowledge sharing with his/her colleagues. He shared his idea on hybrid training combining online lectures where wider participation is expected and physical training in Japan or third countries where practical training to be provided for selected personnel followed by virtual follow-up lectures.

Concerning remote lectures, he informed about “JICA Program for Japanese Studies (“JICA Chair” in short”).

JICA Chair is lecture series in collaboration with the University of Rwanda (UR) to share Japanese development history in which Japan kept her social and traditional cultural identity and adopted technologies from western countries. JICA’s cooperation approach is similar to the history of Japan’s development respecting recipient countries’ social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

The first lecture series planned in March 2020 to invite two professors from Japan to Rwanda had been postponed due to COVID-19, however remote lectures are under discussions with UR.

The idea of “JICA Chair” was originated from a meeting between His Excellency Paul Kagame, the President of the Republic of Rwanda and Dr.

Kitaoka Shinichi, the President of JICA during His Excellency’s visit to Japan in January 2019. The idea was deepened through a meeting in July 2019 between Rt. Hon. Edouard Ngirente and JICA President in Kigali and a meeting between President Kagame and President Kitaoka in August on the sidelines of the 7th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) in Yokohama.,

He expressed his expectation to UR members as well as government officials and public to join lecture series under JICA Chair program.

Finally, he concluded his statement by committing himself to contribute continuously for socio-economic development of Rwanda hand in hand with the people of Rwanda even under difficult circumstances. ●

Fighting Against COVID19: Fabrication of Face Shields for Healthcare Workers



Young Innovators Fabricating Face Shield from locally available materials

As Rwanda fights to stop the spreads of COVID-19, JICA has supported FabLab Kigali to produce and distribute Face Shields to the front-line Medical staffs.

JICA has been supporting Rwanda’s resolve to create knowledge-based economy to advance its socio-economic development for the past 10 years. FabLab

the medical professionals to mitigate the Pandemic. To meet this acute need in time, FabLab contacted JICA for its support. In partnership with ICT Chamber, JICA has supported production of 3,000 Face-Shields using locally available skills and material for the medical professionals who are fighting

Kigali and, its parent organization, ICT Chamber are both part of its support, which have contributed to the growth of ICT, and ICT enabled industries and innovations in Rwanda.

When the COVID-19 Pandemic threatens the health of Rwandan people and when the Government enacted contingency measures, FabLab Kigali saw an acute need of various Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for

courageously to safeguard the health and well-being of Rwandan people.

JICA has supported financing and coordination required to procure raw materials used in the manufacturing of 3,000 Face shields by the FabLab, hire the needed manpower and expertise, and provide associated transport required to procure and distribute the Face-shields.

The single piece Face shield to protect medical professionals was designed and fabricated using a laser cutter. The laser cuts the design from thousands of flat transparent plastic sheets, which were then assembled into Face shields by FabLab personnel. The Face shields must be made rapidly and at low cost because they need to be disposable to avoid contamination and further spreading of the virus.

FabLab Kigali manufactured approximately 400 Face shields per day with 3,000 pieces to meet the demands of the Medical Professionals. The completed Face-shields were distributed to hospitals and medical centers. ●

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“JICA’s Unique Role in Cooperation During and After COVID_19” An Interview with Ambassador Dr. Charles Murigande.

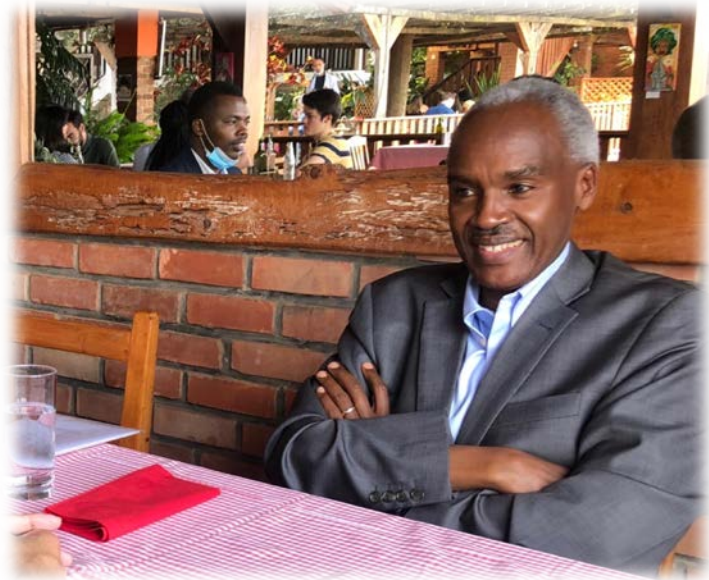
Ambassador Charles Murigande has offered to give an interview to JICA Rwanda News on the role of JICA in Cooperation especially in Rwanda. He spoke about the past, present and the future of Japanese cooperation in Rwanda and Worldwide together with some of his personal experiences working with JICA. The following is an interview article (in a series of 3 articles that will be published in JICA Rwanda News) narrating the views of one of the most respected diplomat Rwanda has ever had on the role of JICA cooperation in general and the fight against COVID-19. He will also be speaking about his own life journey and the cause that kept him fighting until he reached the top leadership position he held with simplicity and much dedication:

1. What is your perception on how JICA works? (Which unique role a cooperation agency like JICA could play in the development process and the bilateral relations to insure a prosperous collaboration?)

From my experience of working with JICA, I have an impression that JICA takes a very long time to go from project identification up to the signing of grant/loan agreement. Indeed, JICA is extremely meticulous in project planning and it requires a lot of patience on the part of the beneficiary country. At times, for a country such as Rwanda which is in hurry for development, it happens that the conditions prevailing during the project identification, preparation, appraisal and ex-ante evaluation will have changed at the time of the beginning of implementation because of the time that has elapsed since project identification.

This may cause problems because it would demand readjustment in the project plans and Japanese do not like making adjustments. They are perfectionists in everything they do whether engineering or project planning and rarely make alternative plans (Plan B). However, this meticulousness in planning has many returns during the implementation phase. Almost all the projects implemented by JICA are successfully completed on time and budget, except in cases of “force majeure”. They are always of very high quality, but also expensive. As is often said, quality has a price!

A cooperation agency such as JICA plays an important role in the process of development cooperation and bilateral relations. Indeed, the efficiency and effectiveness of the cooperation agency of a partner country contribute to making visible that partner country’s contribution to development of the beneficiary country. This in turn



Dr. Murigande in a Meeting with JICA Rwanda Officials.

strengthens and deepens the bilateral relations between the two countries, including both government-to-government and people-to-people relations.

2. What is your expectation for Japan/JICA against COVID-19 pandemic? (Emergency, Mid- and Long-term perspectives)

In the emergency, we expect support to medically fight COVID_19 and limit its human cost. Japan can provide testing equipment such as PCRs, Reagents, Personal Protection Equipment for health professional, etc. For Mid-term Japan can provide financial assistance, such as budget support to jump-start the economy of the country. This can also be in the form of debt relief, though I think that our current debt toward Japan may not have reached maturity. Long-term we can come back to the current project-based cooperation may be targeting the sectors that may have suffered from COVID-19 more than others.

3. How do you think the past and/or on-going Japan/JICA’s co-

operation contributed for controlling / containment of COVID-19 in Rwanda?

Up to now Japan/JICA’s cooperation has focused on TVET education, rehabilitation of the Electricity network, provision of safe drinking water to the Eastern Province, Agriculture Irrigation, Road Construction including Rusumo bridge and One Stop Border Post. Though this cooperation has never been in the health sector, all these projects have contributed indirectly to fighting COVID-19. Having water contributed to meeting the constant need for washing hands. Stable electricity has enable the National COVID-19 response team to work 24 hours and carry medical tests and treatment 7/24 hours. Rusomo Bridge and Kagitumba/Kayonza road have allowed the country to continue to receive the need goods including those related to fighting COVID-19.

The irrigation scheme has ensured the availability of food

for the people of Rwanda and enabled the government to feed the population, which was out of employment and yet live day after day of that employment. The transformation of Rusumo area for the building of the bridge and one stop border post, has enabled Rwanda to move clearing services on the border and stop the flow of truck drivers from Dar-Es-Salaam who were found to have a higher rate of infection.

4. From your viewpoint what are the necessities of changing for our cooperation approach considering dimension changes caused by COVID_19?

It is too early for me to be able to tell you that this sector of the economy is going to

be affected more than the other one and that would justify to shift Japan/JICA's cooperation to this sector rather than the current ones it is invested in. May be staff in MINECOFIN who are closely monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on our economy are better place to say that for the best post-COVID-19 survival of the Rwandan economy, there is need to shift Japan's support to this other sector instead of the ones it's currently focused on. ●

Note to Readers: two more articles will be published about this interview; they will feature some questions about the academic and professional life of Ambassador Murigande. Besides, he will be

speaking about how he thinks the Japanese cooperation can impact Rwanda especially as an educationalist and as an ex-Minister of Communication and Transport and later The Foreign Affairs Minister and Ambassador of Rwanda to Japan. He will also speak about his first encounter with JICA and development cooperation projects, and the re-establishment of the Embassies in Tokyo and Kigali. The three articles in this series will appear consecutively in our Newsletter Number 42, 43 and 44 that can be accessed on our online platforms and on request at JICA Rwanda Office

VOLUNTEERING CORNER: Standing with Coffee Farmers for a Better Tomorrow



Kage's colleagues working during the COVID-19 pandemic times

Muraho! Nitwa Kage Kensaku, I am a JICA volunteer in Rubengera Sector, Karongi district. It has been about 3 months since I returned to Japan due to the coronavirus. I have been volunteering at KOPAKAKI coffee cooperative. Though I have returned to Japan, I am continuing to do what I can from Japan.

Through the help of JICA project "CUP Rwanda" expert, I send our coffee samples to Japanese trading companies, and some coffee roasters to expand Rwandan coffee buyers' network and to increase opportunities for export. I am looking forward to drinking Rwandan coffee in Japan in the near future. Additionally, I have been sharing information remotely with young farmers

about the coffee planting good practices.

In Rwanda, my volunteering service focuses on three major activities. First, my colleagues and I, support farmers who are making their first steps in the coffee industry because our cooperative's main problem is the lack of successors.

Currently, new seven young farmers have joined us. Second, we work on the improvement of cooperative management and coffee quality. Third, we do sales promotion of our coffee to tourists and make sales to hotels managers and supermarkets owners, since Karongi District is visited by many tourists.

I have been able to do these activities thanks to my colleagues. I highly appreciate their teamwork and sincerely hope that coronavirus will be over as soon as possible to be able to work together with my colleagues. Murakoze Cyane! ●



Coffee Cupping in Japan

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JICA SENDS A MESSAGE OF HOPE AMIDST THE WORLD PANDEMIC “To Our Friends and Partners Fighting against Covid-19”.



JICA President, Dr. Kitaoka

This Article is a Shortened Version of “The Executive Summary of JICA’s message to developing countries following a research on covid19”. It presents the findings and JICA’s commitments to developing countries.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has swept across countries at rates faster than many of us had predicted. In the metropolitan area of high-income countries, the outbreak continues to overwhelm health systems, causing unprecedented damage to people’s livelihoods and economics. Many low-and middle income countries (LMICs), who do not always have adequate health systems and are more vulnerable to various crises, have demonstrated ownership over their challenges, heeding the advice provided by experts and drawing on past lessons, and the lessons of the other countries. In light of these, resilient and flexible governance that accepts and encourages the voluntary action of self-motivated individuals and allows the power of science to be used appropriately will become extremely important.

Japan was found to have some unique features when it comes to responding to health crises including strong community awareness of hygiene and lifestyle habits, low obesity rate and resilient health systems to

infectious disease threat with (i) Public health function centered on health administration and “hoken-jo”, (ii) Clinical medicine that supports advanced medical services and (iii) National health care insurance system that insures people’s access to care. Correlations of COVID-19 deaths with aging and urbanization as potential related factors were also examined. Through the coming few months, we will continue to examine these factors and share the results of observations and analysis with the world.

JICA would like to pay tribute to the ownership that each country is demonstrating in its own way. We intend to take on this challenge as a rare opportunity to enhance and improve our operations to continue to respond to the urgent needs of LMICs.

Thus, JICA has made the following three commitments and will continue to work with LMICs as well as with our partners around the world.

(1) JICA will do our best to respond to the urgent needs of LMICs with ingenuity. Utilizing our human

resources and organizational network in the world, to rapidly expand new networks and utilize those resources.

(2) JICA will work harder than ever to build resilient and flexible health systems and make universal health coverage (UHC) a reality around the world through making the most of our scientific knowledge and experience.

(3) JICA will work toward establishing the sustainable “New World: founded on trust and collaboration to realize “human security” and JICA’s vision of “leading the world with trust”

If we overcome this pandemic and use it as a learning opportunity, we can build up this experience to work toward establishing a “New World” that confronts the challenges of modern society. In the “New World,” the way nation protect their citizens, or elicit their voluntary actions, as well the way cities operate, and how people work, learn and communicate may be better than what they are now.

The complete report and message could be read here. ●

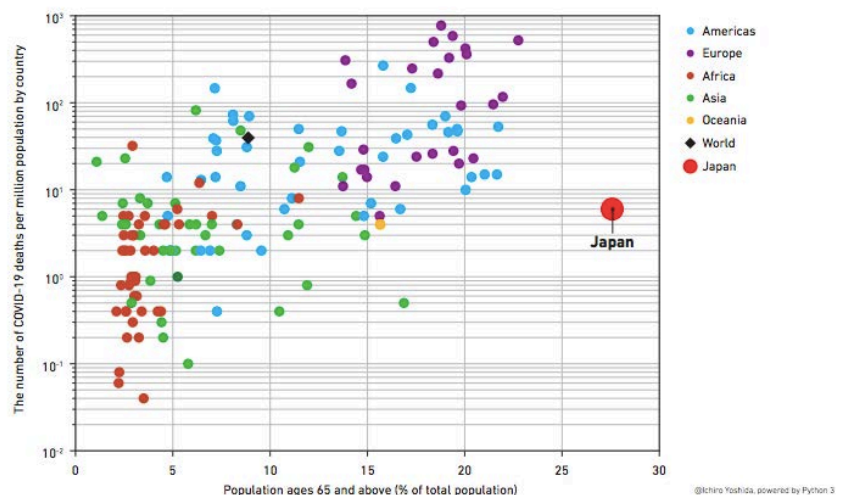


Figure 4. The association between the number of death cases from Covid-19 and aging rate

source: WORLDDOMETER COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, accessed on May 17, 2020. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>;
The World Bank Data, accessed on May 23, 2020. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.65UP.TD.ZS>

JICA Disbursed Approx. 28 Million USD To Assist Nutrition Improvement In Rwanda Through Agriculture Transformation

On July 21st 2020, JICA disbursed the second tranche of “Sector Policy Loan for Nutrition Improvement through Agricultural Transformation”. Disbursed amount was approximately 28 million USD as a result of achievements of the second set of policy actions by the Government of Rwanda (GoR) in its continuous efforts to improve nutrition through agriculture transformation.

On August 16th, 2019, the Governments of Japan and Rwanda agreed on the Sector Policy Loan of 10 billion yen (approximately 93 million USD) to assist Rwanda’s effort to tackle stunting. In the Loan Agreement signed between The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN), the trigger - based disbursement of the loan has

been subdivided into three tranches of 40 %, 30% and 30% to be received over three years. The 1st tranche equivalent to 40% (approx. 36 Million USD) has been subsequently disbursed in December 2019.

Mr. MARUO Shin, Chief Representative of JICA Rwanda Office, appreciated the concerned ministries and agencies of the GoR in achieving the agreed policy actions related to the above disbursement in timely manner, despite challenges faced in the course of implementation, posed by COVID-19 global pandemic. This disbursement is timely because it would assist the GoR in mainstreaming “Nutrition” during the COVID-19 pandemic period when many urban and rural households are suffering from malnutrition.

Despite substantial growth in agricultural production over the past 10

years, food security and nutrition remain concerns, especially looking at the vulnerability to shocks at the household level. A large share of the population remains dependent on rain-fed and subsistence agriculture. Some staple food production remains below the targeted demand for domestic consumption and is substituted by importation. Maintaining a healthy diet is vital during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to FAO, a healthy diet supports a strong immune system, while good nutrition is very important before, during and after an infection.

The Program targets 12 Districts with highest stunting rates; namely Rutsiro, Rubavu, Burera, Nyaruguru, Ngororero, Nyamagabe, Nyamasheke, Gakenke, Gisagara, Gicumbi, Musanze and Ngoma District. At a decentralized level, the program has started to fill food nutrient gap in each target

district and suitable nutritious crop has been identified and are being promoted for production. Other components include making crop calendars for irrigation schemes, and nutrition public awareness campaigns. The program is expected to have a big impact in eradicating under-nutrition and fighting against stunting. ●



Children drinking soya milk. Soya is known having rich protein. Photo taken at an occasion of Cooking Demonstration through the JICA Loan Project (Before the COVID 19 pandemic).



JICA's contribution on Strengthening Resilience against COVID-19 and other Hazards



JICA's Interventions in various key sectors

JICA's cooperation in Rwanda has been focused on Water, Transport, Electricity, Education, Agriculture and ICT. Most of projects in these sectors have contributed directly or indirectly to fighting COVID-19. Having water contributed to meeting the constant need for washing hands. Stable electricity has enable the National covid-19 response team to work 24 hours and carry medical tests and treatment 7/24 hours and so worth. Through this article we would like to look into each sectors contributions which strengthened the Government's resilience which directly, and/or indirectly fight against the current COVID-19.

Water Sector

Since the reopening of JICA in Rwanda in 2005, more than 130,000 people in the Eastern Province have obtained access to safe drinking water through facilities constructed through JICA's Projects. JICA has also continued to support WASAC and private operators in the city of Kigali and rural areas to reduce intermitted water supply and to improve its service, through its technical support. Especially in the capital where population is dense, continuous water supply is a key to prevent spreading of infections, as there is a strong correlation

between water supply coverage and cases of diseases.

IOCV

Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) have been working at the community level in Rwanda since 1987. JOCVs have been active in sensitizing the rural population in keeping hygiene and sanitation. In eastern province, in districts of Rwamagana, Kayonza, Ngoma and Kirehe, the rural population have been sensitized on keeping their hands clean. With the outbreak of COVID-19 in Rwanda these sensitization campaign have helped the population to avoid the spread of COVID 19.



Young man at Rwamagana EXPO, learning how to wash a "jerrycan" from a JOCV

ICT

As Rwanda fights against the spread of COVID-19, JICA Rwanda has supported FabLab Rwanda to produce and distribute 3,000 Face Shields to the front-line Medical staffs. JICA has also supported startups under the 250startups program to upgrade their solutions, as a result, most of these startups' solutions have helped in the fight against the spread of covid-19. An example is e-commerce and digital education platforms.



FabLab Entrepreneurs at work

Infrastructure

The construction of Rusumo Bridge, the OSBP and the improvement of Rusumo-Kayonza road have reduced border waiting time for truck vehicles from days to a matter of hours. It improves trade exchanges along the Central Corridor and Rwanda's connection to the sea, which contributes to the smooth movement of imports and exports for essential equipment for health ser-

vice, and in the long run will contribute to the economic recovery of the country during and after epidemics.

The improvement of Substations and Distribution Lines has contributed to strengthening the electricity system in Rwanda, which is crucial especially in health centers during epidemics.



MININFRA and Japanese High officials at the Inauguration of Ndera Substation

Agriculture

Amid the outbreak of COVID 19 global pandemic with a slowdown of regional and international trade, JICA kept fast-tracking key projects including disbursement of nutrition improvement yen loan (approximately 28 Million USD) and construction of irrigation facilities in Rwamagana. Specific interventions to cope with market shortage and potential price hike of key commodities for both food security and nutrition were pipelined, such as providing vegetable seeds, and egg and milk distribution.

Towards the fight against the COVID-19 and building a resilient country, JICA will



A JICA volunteer interacting with locals on increased harvest

do our best to respond to the urgent needs with ingenuity. JICA will fully utilize our human resources and organizational network in the world, which we have developed over the years and will simultaneously work to rapidly expand new networks and utilize those resources.

JICA has 27 representative offices in Africa and is active in 49 countries of Africa. The agency with its various schemes of cooperation such as grant aid, technical cooperation, Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) loan, Japanese volunteers, Public-Private-Partnership and others, JICA is one of the largest worldwide in the field of cooperation. JICA re-opened its Rwandan office in 2005 making it one of the youngest cooperation that started sometime after the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis. ●



The Staff at JICA Rwanda Office

JICA IN THE MEDIA

28 Million USD To Rwanda By Japan To Assist Nutrition Improvement Through Agriculture Transformation

The East Africa Business Week 23 July /2020

Japan Disburses US\$28M To Assist Rwanda Fight Malnutrition

Taarifa 23/07/2020

The ICT Minister Taking the Lead in Rwanda: Paula Ingabire / Minister of ICT & Innovation, Rwanda

NHKWorld 9th September 2020

Contact Us

JICA RWANDA News is a quarterly newsletter, which focuses on JICA's international perspectives and its involvement in local economic development. This newsletter details the work of JICA in Rwanda.

Editors:

Mr. Koji Nakashima, PR Manager
Mr. Aimable Uwimana, PR Officer

JICA RWANDA
EBENEZER HOUSE,
Umuganda Boulevard, Kigali,
Rwanda
Tel 0788301732/31/23

<Website>

<http://www.jica.go.jp/rwanda/english/>

<Facebook>

<http://www.facebook.com/jicarwandaen/>

JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) is the world's largest bilateral aid agency providing various forms of assistance in over 150 countries around the world.