

# Citizen Participatory Cooperation

Promoting citizen participation based on domestic offices



Students on a school trip visiting Exhibition Space at JICA Global Plaza  
(Photo by Hideo Hanamura)

## Various Citizen Participatory Cooperation Programs

JICA implements various programs to increase citizens' interest in international cooperation to help them understand its necessity and participate.

### Collaboration with Various Regional Resources

Specifically, JICA holds open seminars, deploys programs to support development education, and implements JICA Partnership Program as part of ODA, etc.

Through open seminars, JICA provides many opportunities to hear stories from people experienced in international cooperation. The purposes of programs to support development education are to share knowledge about situations in developing countries and the relationship between the developing countries and Japan, and to provide opportunities to help citizens realize what they can do voluntarily. They also carry out activities such as international cooperation lectures, essay contests for junior high and high school students, and development education study tours for teachers. In the JICA Partnership Program, cooperation activities proposed by citizens that directly benefit local communities are carried out as a joint project with JICA.

These programs are implemented based on domestic offices of JICA in collaboration with various regional groups and individuals such as NGOs, local governments, educational organizations, JICA volunteers, and experts. For such collaboration, JICA coordinators for international cooperation who are mainly dispatched to prefectural international exchange associations undertake coordination with local actors who are interested in international cooperation.

### JICA Global Plaza Utilized by Citizens

JICA Global Plaza opened in Hiroo, Tokyo in April 2006 as a hub for citizen participatory cooperation. JICA Global Plaza is intended to serve as a place where citizens involved in international cooperation can interact.

In the Exhibition Space, where visitors can learn about the situations and life in developing countries through motion pictures, games, and experience, exhibitions on various themes such as human security, environment, Africa, prevention of desertification, and education are presented jointly with NGOs, mass media, educational organizations, etc. The Interchange Zone is utilized by groups involved in international cooperation, such as NGOs,

as a place to distribute information to citizens. In fiscal 2006, the number of visitors reached 43,000, thus demonstrating that the facility is certainly utilized by citizens. Debriefing sessions are also held here by NGOs based outside the Kanto area, and its use for distributing information from local NGOs to the nation has steadily progressed.

### JICA Partnership Program

The JICA Partnership Program is implemented based on proposals made by NGOs, universities, local governments or public-interest corporations in Japan (hereinafter called the 'Partners') that are willing to contribute to international cooperation. As joint projects with Partners, the program aims to conduct cooperation activities proposed by citizens that directly benefit local communities in developing countries.

Though the program can be divided into three types, grassroots-level and meticulous projects that directly contribute to improvements in the living situations and incomes of people in developing countries are carried out. JICA domestic offices serve as contact points, widely recruiting ideas for international cooperation activities in developing countries. In order to realize these ideas, JICA and Partners work together to formulate and implement projects jointly.

### Youth Invitation Program

In the Youth Invitation Program, young people from developing countries are invited to Japan to receive training in their fields of specialization and interact with Japanese people. In fiscal 2006, 1,666 young people from 103 countries were received by 47 prefectures. Local people in the regions that accept young people experience international cooperation and exchange, and their school visits contribute to the promotion of education for global understanding. For example, the students in the visited schools learn about the country of the visiting participants beforehand, and when the participants actually visit the schools, they exchange songs of both countries and so on.

The Youth Invitation Program is being reformed as Training Programme for Young Leaders in fiscal 2007. This program will be implemented as a program specializing in training, with an emphasis on acquisition of knowledge in specialized fields.