

Volunteer Program

Public participation in international cooperation highly regarded by recipient countries



JOCV explaining how to make a musical instrument to students (Tonga)

Outline of Volunteer Program

JICA's volunteer programs are highly regarded by recipient countries as programs that more closely approach and directly benefit communities. At the same time, while a severe environment for ODA budgets continues, public expectation for and evaluation of the volunteer programs are rising as a core scheme of public participatory international cooperation.

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV)

In response to requests from developing countries, the Dispatch of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) Program promotes the activities of young people who wish to cooperate in the economic and social development of those countries. JOCVs generally stay in developing countries for two years, living and working with the local people while taking part in cooperative activities. Cooperation is provided in eight fields: agriculture, forestry and fishery, manufacturing, maintenance and operation, civil engineering and architecture, health and welfare, education and information services, sports, and planning and administration. Around 195 occupations are involved in all. Since the program's inception in 1965, a total of 29,889 volunteers have been dispatched (1,529 volunteers in fiscal 2006).

Senior Volunteers

The Senior Volunteer Program is aimed specifically at middle-aged people who have a strong interest in cooperation activities in developing countries. Under this program, volunteers with extensive skills and plentiful professional experience between the

ages of 40 and 69 are recruited. The recruits are then dispatched to developing countries in accordance with requests received from the governments of those countries. The program can be described as a senior version of the JOCV Program.

Cooperation is provided in various sectors as in the JOCV Program. The number of dispatched volunteers has increased, from 87 in fiscal 1999 to 345 in fiscal 2006, and a total of 3,030 volunteers have been dispatched to 57 countries since the program's inception.

Many baby boomers will reach retirement age in 2007. In response to the Comprehensive "Challenge Again" Support Plan of the Japanese government, which focuses on the utilization of corporate retired human resources, JICA explored dispatch requests and recruited senior volunteers to provide baby boomers with the chance to utilize the skills and experience they gained while they were employed.

Japan Overseas Development Youth Volunteers and Senior Volunteers for Overseas Japanese Communities

Japan Overseas Development Youth Volunteers and Senior Volunteers for Overseas Japanese Communities Programs are dispatched in response to requests from Japanese immigrant communities in Latin America, in order to contribute to the development of those communities. Since the inception of the programs in 1985, 909 Youth Volunteers and 319 Senior Volunteers for Overseas Japanese Communities have been dispatched to 10 countries in total.

From Recruitment to Dispatch

Recruitment and Selection

Volunteers are recruited twice a year, in spring and fall (volunteers for overseas Japanese communities are recruited once a year in the fall). JICA discloses the information about requests on its website and holds explanatory sessions throughout the country more than 500 times every year. The selection process consists of document screenings and interviews with regard to skills, health, and language proficiency. In fiscal 2006, 12,348 people attended the explanatory sessions of the JOCV Program and 1,325 out of 5,857 applicants were accepted. With respect to Senior Volunteers, 6,541 attended the explanatory sessions and 326 out of 1,204 applicants were accepted.

Pre-dispatch Training

Successful applicants undergo training prior to dispatch. The

training lasts for approximately 70 days for JOCVs and about 30 days for senior volunteers, and the training for volunteers for overseas Japanese communities follows each of them. Starting in fiscal 2007, training for JOCVs and senior volunteers will be integrated into a 65-day joint training for greater effectiveness and efficiency. In fiscal 2006, prior to the implementation of the joint training, training for Japan Overseas Development Youth Volunteers and Senior Volunteers for Overseas Japanese Communities were jointly conducted in part.

Language training is at the heart of the training programs, and other components of the programs include the conceptual basis of international cooperation, cross-cultural understanding, history and culture of the recipient country, health and hygiene, and safety management.