

People-Centered Development That Supports Basic Human Life

Protecting people’s health is a top priority amid the COVID-19 pandemic. While bearing this in mind, JICA extends cooperation for human-centered development. Special focus is placed on (1) undertaking JICA’s Initiative for Global Health and Medicine; (2) improving nutrition; (3) expanding quality education; (4) social security as well as disability and development; and (5) sport and development.



Ghana: Through a project for introducing and disseminating the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Handbook, nationwide training is provided that integrates nutrition counseling service and care with dignity with the basic use of the handbook. If they are well informed on maternal and child health as well as nutrition, mothers can make their own decisions about their medical examinations and home care according to their needs and living environments.

Overview of the Issue

Quality growth and poverty eradication through such growth

About 700 million people around the world are still in poverty, living on less than \$1.90 a day.* Reducing absolute poverty remains the most fundamental development issue. JICA promotes people-centered development that supports basic human life under the philosophy of *human security*. To this end, and while embracing inclusiveness, JICA extends cooperation aimed at addressing

various issues in health, nutrition, education, and social security as well as cooperation through sports for all—including vulnerable people such as the poor, children, women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly.

Given the global COVID-19 pandemic, JICA places particular emphasis on countermeasures in the health sector [➔ see page 4]. At the same time, JICA strives to ensure that its activities will help

*World Bank, “Global Monitoring Report 2015/2016: Development Goals in an Era of Demographic Change.”



37
countries

were supported by JICA in introducing and disseminating the MCH Handbook in fiscal 1989–2020



54
countries

were provided with nutrition improvement training by JICA in fiscal 2019–2020



minimize the impact of this infectious disease in addressing other issues as well.

Strategies and Initiatives

Aiming for a society where all can live with peace of mind

Undertaking JICA's Initiative for Global Health and Medicine

JICA is undertaking its Initiative for Global Health and Medicine to focus on response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the most urgent issue of our time, and to advance a resilient health-promoting society [→ see page 18]. Through promoting this initiative, JICA aims to contribute to the achievement of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which ensures that all people receive the health services they need without suffering financial hardship, over the mid- to long term.

Hospitals and research institutions with which JICA has long cooperated in infectious disease control are now working hard as hubs for COVID-19 response in and around the countries where they are based. A case in point is the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR) in Ghana. At one time, NMIMR accounted for as much as 80% of PCR tests conducted in the country. JICA utilizes such networks in delivering international cooperation to protect health.

Improving nutrition

JICA works on nutrition improvement—including the double burden of malnutrition (undernutrition and overnutrition)—for vulnerable people in developing countries, most notably children. JICA has been making multi-sectoral efforts revolving around health and agriculture. The Initiative for Food and Nutrition Security in Africa (IFNA) is working on nutrition improvement for 200 million children in Africa.

Expanding quality education

JICA helps expand quality education to improve children's learning. Such cooperation covers a diversity of issues, ranging from developing and revising textbooks and teacher's guides in Laos and Bangladesh to improving education through community-wide collaboration in Niger, Madagascar, and Ghana [→ see the Project on page 42].



Unity through sports

South Sudan: JICA cooperates with South Sudan's Ministry of Youth and Sports to organize the national sports event for peace and unity, called National Unity Day, every year in Juba, the country's capital. This annual event was first held in 2016. In South Sudan, which has been dogged by inter-ethnic rivalries, the sports event provides an opportunity for young people from across the country to deepen friendship through sports and other interactions regardless of their regions of origin and ethnic backgrounds.

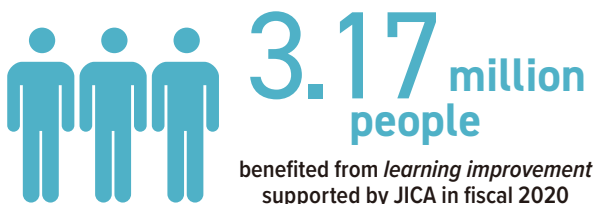
Social security as well as disability and development

JICA supports the establishment of social security systems that provide a foundation for people's lives and social stability in an effort to help create an inclusive society that embraces vulnerable people, including the elderly, women, children, and persons with disabilities. To this end, JICA trains government officials and others who support the formation and implementation of social security policies. It also undertakes activities aimed at encouraging greater economic and social participation by persons with disabilities. This involves working with the Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability (APCD) with whom JICA has long cooperated, as well as utilizing digital transformation (DX) [→ see the Project on page 43].

In addition, JICA incorporates the perspective of disability and development in its activities to promote mainstreaming of disability.

Sport and development

JICA promotes cooperation for sport and development through collaboration with sport-related organizations in Japan and abroad in order to realize a peaceful society where everyone can enjoy sports. Specific focus is placed on (1) improved access to sports in developing areas; (2) the development of human resources who are healthy both mentally and physically; (3) social inclusion for persons with disabilities and women, among other people; and (4) peacebuilding, all through sports.



School Management Committees at the center of activity

Primary schools in Madagascar are faced with a number of problems. For example, they often lack classrooms, desks, stationery, and textbooks. Teachers occasionally fail to show up, causing classes to be canceled. Many pupils lack literacy and numeracy skills. To rectify the situation, JICA has been implementing the "School for All" Project in Madagascar since 2016. Under the project, not only parents and teachers but also community members form a School Management Committee (SMC) and take the initiative in improving the environment for children in collaboration with the government.

After receiving training, SMC members have successfully come to analyze problems and develop appropriate plans. Thanks to their efforts, classrooms have been provided, stationery and textbooks purchased, and volunteer-based remedial classes given. Regarding remedial classes, the project has recommended the introduction of the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach, a proficiency-based teaching method that matches the level of understanding of each student. A three-month remedial class in 2019 resulted in an average improvement of 20 percentage points in test results for about 170,000 students.

A TV educational program that adopted this remedial class method was produced at the initiative of Madagascar's education minister. This program was aired by the national broadcaster during the pandemic-



This teacher is using sticks to help pupils' understanding in a remedial arithmetic class held to compensate for class delays due to the pandemic.

related school closures, helping students with their studies.

Community-based school lunch at 146 schools

Activities by SMCs are not limited to the field of education. In 2017, SMCs launched a community-based school lunch program during the agricultural off-season (around January to March every year), when the food supply is limited due to instability in the rice harvest. Community members contributed rice, water, vegetables, and labor for cooking to support this community-based school lunch program.

The number of schools that provide this type of school lunch jumped from 59 in 2019 to 146 in 2021. Amid strong calls from parents, the President of Madagascar has decided to provide school lunch at all primary schools across the country.

JICA has helped spread the learning improvement method and the community-based school lunch activities, both developed through the project, among some 10,000 schools in Madagascar. It is continuing efforts to roll out these programs across the country in cooperation with international organizations and donors.

VOICE

Outcome sharing provides a strong motivator



Morimoto Minako

JICA Expert, "School for All" Project (Participatory and Decentralized School Management Support Project)

I value highlighting outcomes. As far as literacy and numeracy are concerned, it is important to share achievement test outcomes in ways that are clear to community members and teachers. If they implement project activities and see improved outcomes with their own eyes, they will be more confident of themselves and more motivated to take on new activities.

VOICE

Building on outcomes originating from West Africa



Kunieda Nobuhiro JICA Senior Advisor

The "School for All" project was originally implemented in West Africa. Building on the outcomes and lessons learned there, JICA has developed an applied model and has been working to disseminate it across the country with Madagascan partners. The applied model involves a number of advances, including the adoption of the TaRL approach developed by the Pratham Education Foundation in India, as well as the introduction of the community-based school lunch program.

PROJECT

DAISY Offers the Joy of “Reading” for Persons with Disabilities

Aiming to spread the Arabic version

Some people feel inconvenience when they try to obtain knowledge and information indispensable for their social participation. They include people with print disabilities such as visual impairments, learning disabilities, and upper limb impairments. Information and communication technology (ICT) may be useful in improving their access to information.

Egypt, where persons with disabilities total some 10.11 million and account for a little over 10% of the population, formulated an ICT strategy in 2012 that calls for their empowerment and greater social participation, among other things. Progress had been made in producing e-books in English and other alphabet-based languages with the help of the Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY), an international standard that provides a powerful tool for people who have difficulty reading. However, such publications were not available in Arabic.

This prompted JICA to work with a Japanese company specializing in DAISY production to develop DAISY book production software in Arabic. JICA has been working on the promotion of DAISY and the training of production engineer leaders under the Project for Improvement of Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities through Improvement of Information Accessibility over a period from March 2019 to December 2021.



A hands-on session for children with various disabilities to experience DAISY publications held at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

Training engineers for publication production

DAISY is not just about recorded sound; it allows users to jump from the table of contents to any page of interest. Multimedia DAISY, which allows for synchronization between sound and text, is useful for persons with learning disabilities as well. It is capable of not only highlighting the part that is being read aloud but also adjusting display settings such as the font size and color, line spacing, and background color to suit the visual abilities of the user.

This project has trained 42 leaders of

DAISY production engineers and produced 33 DAISY titles in Arabic. The project plans to produce publications on various sectors such as education, health, and disaster risk reduction in DAISY format and make them available on the websites of the Egyptian Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and the National Library and Archives of Egypt. Also, the project organized hands-on sessions that allowed children with visual impairments or learning disabilities to enjoy DAISY experience. There, participants expressed the joy of “reading” DAISY publications.

VOICE

Hoping that DAISY will spread across Egypt

Dr. Mahmoud Anwar
Teaching Assistant at the Spanish Department,
Ain Shams University

I received short-term DAISY training designed for persons with visual impairments. Both Egyptian and Japanese lecturers were clear and kind. When I created a DAISY publication by myself for the first time, I was elated, as if I had discovered a whole new world. I hope this technology will spread among universities across Egypt.

VOICE

Hoping to communicate important information with DAISY

Dr. Kawamura Hiroshi
Vice President,
Assistive Technology Development Organization

The need to protect lives from the pandemic has made me recognize anew how important it is to accurately understand texts for prevention and treatment purposes. I understand that Arabic DAISY is useful for persons with disabilities in not only Egypt but also other Arabic-speaking countries. I hope to continue our support to meet the expectations of persons with disabilities as well as former training participants.