

Peaceful and Equitable Societies That Prevent Conflicts

To realize peace and equity, it is important to build states and societies that prevent the occurrence and recurrence of violent conflict.

Reducing conflict risks such as poverty, disparity, and a lack of the rule of law, as well as strengthening governance, will increase the capacity of states and societies to cope with crises, which in turn will help achieve peace and stability.



Philippines: Looking ahead to the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Government, JICA is implementing a cooperation project in Mindanao to support building institutions and training public administrators. In this project, a Japanese expert has teamed up with local government officials in charge of finances to carry out activities aimed at winning the confidence of local residents. These activities include those that support the local governments' revenue mobilization. The photo shows a tax payment campaign supported by JICA.

Overview of the Issue

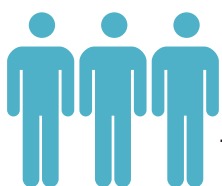
More violent conflicts are protracted and internationalized

Violent conflicts will not only claim lives but also hurt people both psychologically and physically and destroy communities. The number of violent conflicts has generally been on the rise. As of the end of 2020, the number of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) worldwide stood at 82.4 million,¹ an all-time high.

The World Bank predicts that by 2030, up to two-thirds of the

world's extreme poor could concentrate in fragile and conflict-affected states.² A violent conflict often recurs due to lingering social instability in the post-conflict setting. In conflict risk areas, it is important to prevent a conflict from occurring and recurring by addressing a range of conflict factors by means such as establishing and strengthening state institutions that are based on the rule of law and can be trusted by the people.

In recent years, violent conflicts tend to be protracted and internationalized. Almost 80% of refugees are displaced for more than five years.³ Violent extremism often has spillover effects



Some **820,000**

The number of refugees and asylum-seekers in the areas* administered by local government officials in Uganda supported by JICA's capacity development
[→ see the Project on page 46]

*The areas are the Acholi and West Nile Sub-Regions of Uganda; the number is based on 2020 UNCHR statistics.



10,529

The number of people who received JICA's training for conflict recurrence prevention and social reconciliation for peacebuilding in fiscal 2017–2020

on neighboring countries. These trends point to the need for a humanitarian-development nexus more than ever.

The COVID-19 pandemic is taking a particularly severe toll on fragile and conflict-affected areas with unstable state functions and inadequate economic infrastructure. Dissatisfaction with governments' COVID response and the resultant economic downturn, as well as intensifying social confrontation, often lead to more conflicts and riots.

Strategy

Aiming for inclusive and resilient states and societies based on the rule of law

The *human security* approach

JICA's peacebuilding support focuses on (1) institution building and human resources development to build a government that is trusted by the people; (2) community reconciliation for a resilient society; and (3) the recovery, reconstruction, and strengthening of social and human capital. This is an approach based on *human security*, a concept that focuses on developing resilient social systems through the combination of (1) government capacity development as well as institution building for protection, and (2) empowerment of the people and communities.

Humanitarian-development nexus

As displacement of refugees and IDPs is more and more protracted, JICA's cooperation focuses more on the coexistence of refugees and host communities by (1) building the capacity of local governments of host communities to cope with the inflow and stay of refugees; and (2) encouraging refugees and host communities to work together for their development and livelihood improvement.

Strengthening of governance

To realize a society where all can live a happy life with dignity, JICA shares—and works to embody—universal values, including (1) the rule of law, (2) fundamental human rights such as freedom of the person and freedom of expression, and (3) democracy.

It also helps forming the foundations of socioeconomic development by encouraging effective allocation of state resources.

Activities and Achievements

Addressing risk factors and developing administrative institutions

Strengthening administrative organizations to win public trust

In fragile and conflict-affected areas, people's lack of confidence in the government and among the people can reignite a conflict.

As such, JICA focuses on local governments that are closest to the people, supporting them in delivering comprehensive public services to communities, including refugees and IDPs, as well as in building confidence in such communities [➔ see the Project on page 46]. JICA's interventions during 2020 in response to the pandemic



Overcoming conflict and rebuilding communities

Colombia: Community members surround a coffee nursery under their co-management. Through the activities of a Japanese expert, JICA supported former IDPs in rebuilding their lives after returning home and helped conflict-ravaged communities with confidence-building and inclusive community development through collaboration among residents.

include (1) providing medical supplies and equipment such as masks and oxygen respirators to refugee camps in Palestine as requested by people living there; and (2) sharing infection-prevention information in Côte d'Ivoire through SNSs and posters.

Strengthening governance

To achieve and maintain peace and stability, it is important to ensure that state institutions function properly so as to win public trust. JICA is engaged in (1) building and improving institutions that play such a role, including the judiciary and public administration, the media, and fiscal and financial systems; and (2) developing human resources that manage these institutions and systems [➔ see the Project on page 47].

Eliminating gender-based violence

In fragile and conflict-affected areas, gender-based violence (GBV) tends to be used as a means of ruling others by assault or fear. In fact, it occurs frequently there. JICA has conducted studies on issues surrounding GBV in five African countries, including Kenya and Rwanda, to explore the possibility for future cooperation with these countries. It also has extended cooperation to help eliminate GBV through developing human resources that support criminal justice and policing.

1. UNHCR, "Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2020."

2. World Bank, "Fragility, Conflict & Violence" (as of July 1, 2021).

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/overview>

3. World Bank, "Forced Displacement" (as of July 1, 2021).

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/forced-displacement>

Promoting humanitarian-development nexus

The more domestic and international cooperation is concentrated on refugees as they continue to arrive in large numbers and stay for an extended period of time, the more likely friction is to arise with residents in host communities. A similar risk is faced even by Uganda, a “country of generous open-door policy for refugees” that guarantees their freedom of movement and employment. This highlighted more than ever the importance of development cooperation for refugee-hosting communities.

In harmony with humanitarian assistance by agencies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), JICA works to strengthen the capacity of the local governments and extends development cooperation to host communities so as to build confidence between local authorities and residents. To date, JICA has promoted such “humanitarian-development nexus” and has provided cooperation aimed at increasing community resilience.

In the Acholi Sub-Region in northern Uganda, the conflict between government forces and antigovernment guerrillas from the 1980s to the 2000s gave rise to up to two million internally displaced persons (IDPs). As an increasing number of IDPs returned home and resettled, JICA carried out a project from 2011 to 2015 designed to support local governments in formulating community development plans and building their implementation capacity. JICA expanded its scope to include the West Nile Sub-Region—where many refugees from the neighboring



Tents for refugees and huts for local residents stand side by side in Boroli Settlement in the West Nile Sub-Region (above)
Refugees learning rice cultivation skills (right)
(Photo: Takeshi Kuno)



South Sudan and Democratic Republic of the Congo were staying—under the Project for Capacity Development of Local Government for Strengthening Community Resilience in Acholi and West Nile Sub-Regions, which was implemented from 2016 to 2020.

Planning and implementation tools introduced

The purpose of this project was to encourage local government officials to learn how to formulate development plans

that are based on data, are objective, and are transparent, and also learn how to implement inclusive community development. To this end, two types of tools were developed. The first type, called “development planning tools,” was designed to evaluate different requests from villages in terms of a score against objective criteria to assess their priority. The second type, dubbed “community development implementation tools,” was aimed at reflecting the voices of diverse people in the project implementation. With the help of these tools, the project aimed not only to develop the planning capacity of local government officials but also to improve the livelihoods of local residents, including the socially vulnerable, by expanding their farmland and boosting crop production.

These tools were welcomed by many local government officials who actually used them. One official said that the tools made the whole process transparent and illustrative, facilitating the formulation and implementation of development plans.

VOICE

Our practice has become a national model for regional development



Lemeriga George
Obongi District Planner, Uganda

We, local government officials, have mastered these planning tools. This has enabled us to formulate effective, efficient, and inclusive development plans. Evidence-based, participatory, and bottom-up development plans contribute to better quality of people’s lives. These tools have been incorporated in the Local Government Development Planning Guidelines of the Ugandan National Planning Authority.

PROJECT

Training and Supporting Customs Officials in South Sudan

Aiming for the international standardization of customs procedures

Attaining independence in 2011, South Sudan is the newest country in the world. JICA has been cooperating with the country's customs services, which are important not least in terms of stabilizing the economy and securing revenues in the post-independence setting.

South Sudan used to set tariff rates on its own tariff nomenclature, and customs services were provided by officials with inadequate knowledge and experience. This state of affairs promoted the launch in 2016 of the Project for Capacity Development of South Sudan Customs Services for Introduction of Harmonized System Code (HS Code), which later came to be referred to as Phase 1. The aim was to introduce the HS Code—a set of internationally common classification numbers for import and export items—toward the broader goal of modernizing and internationally standardizing the country's customs services. The project was succeeded by Phase 2 of the same title in 2020.

Due to the unfavorable security situation, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, South Sudanese customs officials are at the center of project activities in Juba, the country's capital, with Japanese experts remotely supporting their activities from Uganda, a neighboring country. These customs officials have acquired knowledge of and skills in the HS Code and received trainers' training under Phase 1.

One major factor that made such technology transfer possible in a short period of time was the custom-made "homework" Japanese experts continued



Mitsunori Numaguchi, a JICA expert, is giving HS classification training to South Sudanese customs officials in Phase 1 of the project (above). This customs official has been trained in HS classification in Phase 1 and is now giving such training in Phase 2 (right).



assigning to these officials every month as a post-training follow-up. Such homework concerned HS classification and tax calculation, among other things. Based on the performance on the homework, Japanese experts prepared questions the next month that help deepen their understanding. This cycle was repeated, resulting in the gradual improvement of their practical skills in HS classification. Their knowledge was further increased after they were entrusted with the job of teaching HS classification. This experience

made them more confident and motivated.

Remote cooperation on the move

Behind these positive outcomes is meticulous support by Japanese experts. When South Sudanese HS instructors give training, Japanese experts monitor their performance from Uganda via a teleconference system, providing complementary explanations as well as feedback on where to improve, as necessary.

Online training and homework are continuing in Phase 2. Japanese experts also work around unstable power supply and internet connectivity by, for example, storing training material data on USB memory devices and sending them to South Sudan. Furthermore, they have started new supportive endeavors. For example, they have developed a useful application that allows customs officials and customs brokers to readily refer to the HS Nomenclature and the Tariff Book—both of which are needed for customs declaration—on a smartphone.

VOICE

I'll never forget the knowledge I've learned from JICA experts!



Joyce William
Head of the HS Unit, Customs Division, National Revenue Authority of South Sudan

As the head of the HS Unit, I am taking advantage of what I have learned in the project to give instructions to customs brokers as well as other customs officials. I often have a hard time trying to ensure that they understand and act on such instructions. Still, I enjoy my work. Modernizing customs services is an important issue as it helps secure revenues. I am very grateful for the JICA experts who support us even amid the pandemic.