

SERBIA

SHARING JAPAN'S DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE: THE UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE AND JICA JOINTLY LAUNCH "JICA CHAIR"

On March 22, JICA Balkan Office and the University of Belgrade co-hosted the opening ceremony for "JICA Chair" Program at the University.

JICA Chair program intends to promote cooperation between JICA and the universities from partner countries through the academic exchange and series of lectures on Japanese experience of modernization in the fields of economy, management, politics, healthcare, education, among others. Since JICA Chair was established in 2018, it has been implemented at universities in 39 countries.

At the opening ceremony, opening re-

marks were made by H.E. Aleksandra Kovac, Ambassador of Serbia to Japan (online), Mr. TSUBOTA Tetsuya, Charge d'Affaires from the Embassy of Japan to Serbia, Professor Vladan Djokic, Rector of the University of Belgrade and Mr. TAKEICHI Jiro, Chief Representative of JICA Balkan Office.

Then, a special online lecture on "Post-war Japanese diplomacy and current relations between Japan and China" was held by Prof. TAKAHARA Akio, Executive Director of JICA Ogata Research Institute. The lecture was followed by a brief discussion facilitated by Professor Ema Petrovic, Head of

the Department for oriental studies at the Faculty of Philology.

Ms. Gazela Pudar Drasko, Director of the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory of the University of Belgrade, closed the ceremony and announced the series of lectures, which will be held throughout 2022.

Through JICA Chair program in Serbia, Japanese professors and experts will deliver lectures with an aim to deepen the understanding of Japanese experience and knowledge, gained through the process of modernization, among the students and researchers of the University of Belgrade.



Professor TAKAHARA at the online lecture



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HANDOVER CEREMONY OF EQUIPMENT FOR COUNTERING INFECTIOUS DISEASES IN KOSOVO

On February 15, a handover ceremony for “the Project for Capacity Development for Countering Infectious Diseases Including COVID-19” was held at the University Clinical Center of Kosovo (UCCK) in Prishtina. The participants at the handover ceremony were H.E. Dr. Rifat Latifi, Minister of Health, Dr. Valbon Krasniqi, Director, Hospital and University Clinical Service of Kosovo, Mr. YAMANAKA Keisuke, Charge d’Affaires, the Embassy of Japan in Kosovo, Mr. TAKEICHI Jiro, Chief Representative, JICA Balkan Office.

COVID-19 has had a severe impact on Kosovo citizens’ health and its economy.

Though the Kosovo authorities have fought against spreading COVID-19, and have taken measures to mitigate the negative effects on the health of the people, struggling with COVID-19 is ongoing issue for Kosovo. To handle this issue, enhancing capacity for countering infectious diseases is indispensable.

The Project aims to strengthen hospital capacities in Kosovo health system through providing safety, comfort, and mobility for a broad range of patients with varying conditions and treatment in secondary and tertiary hospitals for Kosovo citizens.

JICA arranged provision of 675 hospital beds to the University Clinical Center of Kosovo (UCCK) and 6 general hospitals in Prizren, Gjilan, Ferizaj, Gjakova, Peja, and Mitrovica. UCCK receives 359 beds and general hospitals receive 316 beds.

By modernized hospital beds in UCCK and the Regional Hospitals and by obtaining information through the webinars regarding infectious diseases including COVID-19, as well as the Health Sector Survey, JICA hopes that the contribution will strengthen hospital capacities in Kosovo.



Handover Ceremony at the University Clinical Center of Kosovo (UCCK)



Donated hospital beds at the University Clinical Center of Kosovo

HANDOVER OF EQUIPMENT FOR UPGRADING THE ARCHIVE SYSTEM OF RADIO TELEVISION OF KOSOVO

The Project for Capacity Development of Radio Television of Kosovo (RTK) Phase 2” was launched in February 2021, as a continuation of phase I of the Project.

The purpose of the project is to broadcast the stories throughout Kosovo to Kosovan people with quality. The project aims at establishing regional offices in Prizren and Mitrovica, developing the internal criteria for fair and unbiased program production

and utilizing efficiently digital archive system.

The expert team identified the issues of the present archive system and its operating procedures and proposed to upgrade systems to offer sufficient capacity. In line with this, JICA has procured archive system to RTK in total worth of 56,923 EUR. With the donated equipment archive capacity of RTK will be extended and strengthened.



Storage server at RTK

HAND-OVER OF EQUIPMENT FOR 2ND PHASE OF FOLLOW-UP PROJECT IN AGRICULTURE

After the completion of the first phase of Follow-up project for support to small-scale farmers in North Macedonia, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE), National Federation of Farmers (NFF) and JICA Balkan office extended the activities to two more regions in North Macedonia, Tetovo and Dojran.

On November 17, equipment including a trailer with calibration hole for cereals and a set of small-scale equipment for harvesting and post-harvesting operations was handed over to the agricultural association of cereal producers “ZZP Kamenjane” from the village of Kamenjane in Tetovo. The mechanization is expected to help the farmers improve the post-harvesting processes, by better sorting and calibration, appropriate storing and post-harvest treatment to sustain the quality of the grains.

On December 15, the final hand-over of equipment was held in the village of Furka, Dojran. Women focus group of Furka, who are mainly engaged in production of fruit jelly and marmalade from figs, pomegranate and grapes, received small reversed duplicator and set of pots to increase the quality and quantity of their products.

The handover ceremonies were followed by the set of online training sessions for the

beneficiaries from Tetovo and Dojran to help them plan marketing strategy and expand sales of their products. The training sessions

were conducted by Ms. Elena Novachka and Mr. Igor Despotovski from MAFWE, who participated in JICA training programs.



Mr. TAKEICHI, CR of JICA Balkan Office handing over the equipment to the Women Focus Group of Furka, Dojran

ALUMNI NORTH MACEDONIA ORGANIZED A LECTURE BY JAPANESE EXPERTS ON TOURISM

On February 2, The JICA Alumni in North Macedonia – MAK-JAMS, in collaboration with the Embassy of Japan in North Macedonia organized a lecture by Japanese experts on the topic “Balancing Environmental Conservation and Regional / Tourism Promotion of Ohrid Lake through Appropriate Management of World Heritage Sites”.

The first lecture was held by Professor YAMASAKI on the topic of “Conservation/

Preservation of world heritage in line with tourism promotion”. After this lecture, participants had the opportunity to ask questions and Professor Yamasaki provided them with answers and comments sharing his personal experience and opinion how some of the issues, people are facing on the coast of Ohrid Lake, should be addressed.

The second lecture was held by professor ICHIKI on the topic of “Experience from pres-

ervation of Biwa Lake by public institutions in cooperation with citizens”.

This event provided a unique opportunity to all relevant entities in North Macedonia and Albania to learn from Japanese experience on a very important topic. The event was also an opportunity to present MAK-JAMS to a wider public as a well-organized organization for sharing experiences and knowledge between Japan and North Macedonia.

ALBANIA

100 YEARS OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN JAPAN AND ALBANIA- CULTURAL AND THEMATIC SEMINAR ORGANIZED BY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF ALBANIA AND THE EMBASSY OF JAPAN

On February 18, JICA Alumni Association Albania (JAAA) organized a Cultural event and Thematic Seminar together with the Embassy of Japan (EoJ) at the Gallery Art Tirana, where the exhibition related to the 100th anniversary of the diplomatic relationships of Japan and Albania was ongoing. The members of the JAAA, representatives of JICA project implementing organizations and friends of Japan had a chance, firstly to see the exhibition of photographs, and then to attend the JAAA combined event.

Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Mr. TAKADA Mitsuyuki opened the event and gave a speech on the cooperation of the two countries. The staff of the EoJ demonstrated Japanese Tea Ceremony, Calligraphy and Origami.

At the Thematic seminar, the representatives of either counterpart organizations or JICA Project Team members gave a short presentation of each ongoing project in Albania.



Japan's Tea Ceremony demonstrated by the staff of the EoJ

ALBANIA

SMALL-SCALE FOLLOW-UP PROJECT ON ENHANCING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS IN ALBANIA

Ms. Anxhela Bushati, Director of Project Department at the Ministry of Finance and Economy and a Board member of JICA Alumni Albania, applied for JICA Small-scale Follow-up (SFU) project with an aim to enhance entrepreneurial skills of new or existing SMEs in Albania that are willing to expand their business and increase their competitiveness in the domestic and global market.

The target group for this project were the entrepreneurs who are in the initial stages of developing their entrepreneurial activity as well as those who are intending to start a new business. The project supported them in generating entrepreneurial ideas and creating an individual or group business plan, by orienting them towards its design.

Based on the experience gained during the training in Japan, Ms. Bushati organized five

workshops in some of the largest cities of Albania, where there is vigorous economic development and good ground for the commencement

of new entrepreneurship. Two workshops were held in Tirana and one workshop in Durres, Fier and Shkodra for 125 participants.



1st Workshop in Tirana on 28th January 2022

HAND-OVER OF EQUIPMENT FOR SMALL-SCALE FOLLOW-UP PROJECT

On February 8, handover ceremony for the Small-scale Follow-up Project (SFU) “Building capacity and raising awareness about natural disaster in Bosnia and Herzegovina – lesson learned in Japan” was organized in the Primary School “Grbavica I” in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The purpose of the project is to raise awareness of the pupils about the climate

change and natural disasters and teach them about disaster risk reduction in an interactive way.

Five primary schools in Bosnia and Herzegovina have received meteorological station, geographical wall maps and educative posters. In addition, educative workshops were organized in targeted schools during February.

The hand-over ceremony was attended by Ms. Almira Tabaković, Principal of the Primary School “Grbavica I” together with teachers and pupils, Mr. Bakir Krajinović, SFU applicant and JICA Alumni BiH member, Mr. TAKEICHI Jiro, Chief Representative of JICA Balkan Office among others.



Opening remarks by Mr. Takeichi, CR of JICA Balkan Office



Attendees at the handover

SMALL-SCALE FOLLOW-UP PROJECT: PUBLICATION ON ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION IN MONTENEGRO

From November 2021 to February 2022, a team of selected experts developed a study on the impact of climate changes on abundance and growth of main tree species in the National parks of Montenegro. After the fieldwork, through which the team collected the samples and analyzed them, they published the Final Study for the future use of the Public Enterprise for National Parks of Montenegro and Management Plan and Programs.

Mr. Slobodan Stijepovic, the applicant for this SFU project, participated in JICA KCCP “Adaptation to Climate Change” in JFY2016 and used this opportunity through Alumni association of Montenegro to implement his idea and contribute to the environment conservation in Montenegro.



Member of the team, collecting samples

INTRODUCTION OF NEW VOLUNTEERS

In October 2021, Mr. TANAKA Akihiro arrived to the Municipality of Knic to support administrative management in the field of agriculture as JICA Volunteer. He has experience working in prefectural offices and city halls in Japan, where he was involved, not only in the agricultural field but also in the city policy-making.



Mr. TANAKA Akihiro in front of his workplace

Ms. SAKAI Takako has started working at the Tourist Organization Zlatibor on tourism promotion from mid March this year, and she will stay there until 2024. In Japan, she has worked in media as an editor for 8 years, and for the last 10 years, she has worked in several tourism organizations across Japan.



Ms. SAKAI Takako (second from the right) with her colleagues

In January 2022, Ms. MIYATA Tomomi was dispatched to the Emergency room of the Civil protection ward of the Municipality of Ub, where she will be conducting disaster prevention drills for citizens for the next two years. She thinks Serbian people are very friendly and caring, which is very important in the case of disaster.



Ms. MIYATA Tomomi with her colleague

FAREWELL TO VOLUNTEERS

Ms. OMAE Yuka, former volunteer in marketing at NGO “Child’s heart” (Left Serbia in November 2021).

“Volunteering at Child’s heart was a very valuable experience and it was an opportunity to look back at myself. Through my life in Serbia, I was able to broaden my insights. I would like to continue supporting the NGO as one of the biggest fans”, Ms. OMAE says.



Ms. OMAE Yuka, holding a card from her colleagues

Mr. YUJI Kazuki, former volunteer at Karate club “Knjaz” in Arandjelovac (Left Serbia in January 2022).

“I would like to thank to all people I met in Serbia. I will never forget the days I spent in Arandjelovac and I hope I will be back some day”, Mr. YUJI says.



Mr. YUJI Kazuki at practice

SEMINAR ON “CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT” HELD IN BELGRADE

On December 14, a seminar on “Current Trends and Future Opportunities in Public Transport” was held as a part of JICA’s Technical Cooperation on “The Project for Modernization of Public Urban Transport

in the City of Belgrade”. Twelve speakers from Serbia, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Japan and Spain talked about the current situation of public transportation in Serbia and around the world. One of the hot

topics discussed during the seminar was the role and the challenge of public transportation under the situation influenced by COVID-19.



Opening remarks by Ambassador KATSUMATA



Panelists at the session “Public transportation in the world”

INTRODUCTION OF NEW STAFF

MS. SAITO YUMIKO

PROJECT FORMULATION ADVISOR FOR ODA LOANS

Hi everyone! This is my comeback and I don't remember how many times I have done it since my first visit in March 2002. My name is SAITO Yumiko, a newly assigned Project Formulation Advisor as the successor to Mr. TABATA, in charge of ODA Loan Projects at JICA Balkan Office.

Previously, I was on the same position from May 2010 to July 2019, so I am rather familiar with the region, but I am very happy to see it again with the fresh eyes.

I believe one of the most significant attractions of the region is the coexistence of tradition and modernity, as well as great diversity and tolerance. I am very exciting to visit all places in the region, to find the development of the previous projects, and work on new cooperation projects for the future contribution. Above all, I am looking forward to seeing you all and working together.

(In fact, immediately after arriving in Belgrade I found a new ice cream shop! Amazing discovery.)



Ms. SAITO Yumiko

MS. NAGASHIMA MANA

PROJECT FORMULATION ADVISOR (NORTH MACEDONIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AND MONTENEGRO)

Good day everyone. My name is NAGASHIMA Mana. I commenced my duty in March, as a Project Formulation Advisor of JICA Balkan Office for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and North Macedonia. While overseeing the implementation of ongoing projects, my primary focus will be on formulation of projects that will contribute to the environmental protection and private sector development. This is my second assignment in JICA Balkan office after 2016-2017, during which I was in charge of Albania and Kosovo. I am delighted to be back in Serbia, and to be provided with the opportunity to contribute to the sustainable development of the region. While new challenges keep appearing in our world, I believe in power and ability of people in bringing positive changes with our daily efforts and commitment. I look forward to working together to make our world a better place for all.



Ms. NAGASHIMA Mana