

The trend of all knowledge at the present is to specialize, but archaeology has in it all the qualities that call for the wide view of the human race, of its growth from the savage to the civilized, which is seen in all stages of social and religious development.

Margaret Murray

(13 July 1863 - 13 November 1963), prominent British Egyptologist and anthropologist



Early child education highlighted in seminar



The seminar introduced the logistics behind volunteer dispatching

A seminar shedding light on JICA's volunteer activities in Egypt took place on 5 March at Ramses Hilton Hotel.

The seminar was held to attract the ministries towards the volunteer activities, which cover a wide range of fields like early child education, assisting women in improving their livelihood as well as assisting people with disabilities.

"People usually look at JICA's big projects like the construction of the metro line and the GEM, but these volunteer activities are the ones that reach the grass-roots level," JICA's chief representative Hideki Matsunaga said.

"The volunteers come to Egypt with no big experience, no language skills but they are sincere and we appreciate these activities with a warm heart," he concluded.

Currently 30 Japanese volunteers in Egypt teaching handicrafts, chinaware, fine art, dressmaking and Judo across the different governorates of Egypt. During the seminar, a number of volunteers demonstrated some of the fruitful outcomes of their work through presentations, pictures and videos. Several volunteers discussed their work in teaching children.

Early Child Education is one of successful and sustainable examples of JICA's volunteer activities. In Kafr El Sheikh, a large number of nurseries were transformed from a mundane teaching place that children detest to a place, where children enhance their creativity through play.

Several nurseries now follow the model of "El Helal El Ahmar" nursery, which has successfully adopted the Japanese JOUSOU (cultivation of sentiments) education. This system gives special attention to the cultivation of aesthetic, moral, and sentimental senses.

On a field visit by JICA reporters, Iman Mohamed, an expert in the Ministry of Family and Population, explained the challenges faced in making nurseries more children-friendly.

"The biggest problem we faced at the beginning was the parents, who want their children to go to the nursery take regular lessons of Arabic and Math's and reciting the Quran," she said.

"We were worried that if we alter our activities to games, play and arts, many parents would immediately transfer their children to other nurseries," she continued.

However, after trying the model gradually it proved a success. Even parents who transferred their children, brought them back due to the children's insistence.

Having worked extensively with JICA's volunteers, she has made it her mission to improve the nurseries in Egypt. During the visit, she was holding a presentation for two teachers comparing Japanese nurseries to Egyptian ones, while giving pointers on how to handle children by talking about the most minute of details.

"In Japan, each kid has his own table for eating. They eat by themselves and are allowed to soil themselves with food. The floor below the table is covered in order to prevent messiness," she instructed two eager teachers. As the early child education is heavily overlooked, such initiatives are one step forward in raising awareness about the importance of play in the growth of children.



Play enhanced in Kafr El Sheikh nursery with the help of volunteers



Prize-giving ceremony held for JICA's first essay competition winners



Award winners (left to right: Nada Youssef, Mickel Girgis, Amany Ezzat, Ahmed Ismail, Nesreen Sobhy)

On 24 March JICA with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education held the prize-giving ceremony of its 1st essay contest at the Ministry of Education premises.

The ceremony was attended by the winners and their families, Ministry of Education evaluators, Toshiba El Araby and JICA.

"I want to thank the students for these wonderful ideas," said Samira Bakr, the English advisor in an opening speech, while JICA's Chief Representative, Hideki Matsunaga, explained that there are in fact no "winners" and "losers" as each student, who has participated benefited and added to the contest. He emphasized that the contest is held as an incentive for the students to develop and reflect upon their dreams.

As a sponsor, Medhat El Araby of Toshiba El Araby gave a laptop to the first-prize winner, Nesreen Sobhy, and tablets for the second and third prize winners, Ahmed Ismail and Amany Ezzat, respectively. He also gave out air purifiers to special award winners Nada Youssef and Alaa Sobhy for writing good essays on the topic of environment. Fourth-prize winners Mekhael Osama and Mickel Girgis received JICA's volunteer products.

El Araby then encouraged the students by narrating the story of his father's long journey to reach the success of El Araby factories.

The first prize winner, Nesreen Sobhy, also gave an enthusiastic speech about her hopes and dreams of the future.

Special pavilion for Japan at International Fair

This year, Japan was the guest of honour of the Cairo International Fair held from 19 till 29 March. A large pavilion hosting different Japanese organizations and companies, like JETRO, Toyota, Toshiba and Japan Foundation was provided for this occasion.



Chief Representative Hideki Matsunaga introduces JICA's activities to Egypt's PM

JICA set up a pavilion displaying a video of its activities, while distributing brochures and newsletters for more information about its work in Egypt. Products made by different NGOs, in which JICA's volunteers work, were also sold during the 10-day event. Proceeds went to the NGOs.



Feature

Borg El Arab airport: Gateway onto the water and sky



Almond-shaped rooftop symbolizes airport's uses



passengers head to their gates

"The shape itself tells the story of this airport," said Keizo Yamada, a Japanese expert dispatched from Japan Airport Consultants to Borg El Arab Airport project. The big almond-shaped rooftop is a symbolic icon of the airport and in fact the designers of this airport elaborated that it could be seen in two ways: Faluka or a wing of an airplane. The ancient Egyptian ship symbolizes the gateway of a marine road, whereas the wing as an air way. Connecting the two modes is one of the main missions of the airport, but it is not the whole story. In fact, The airport is a part of the future development plan of Borg El Arab, 45 km west of Alexandria, the 2nd largest city in Egypt.

Borg El Arab, which is divided in the residential Borg El Arab City and the industrial New Borg El Arab City, is setting up to become more important in the industrial sector of the region. Not only is it near one of Egypt's main industrial cities, but it has 600 factories in its surrounding area. A new urban development is being implemented within 15,200 acres of land and would consist of industrial, commercial, residential and educational establishments. Several infrastructure developments are also on-going. In October 2011, the rail link between Alexandria and new Borg El Arab opened and a number of projects like crossover bridges are in progress.

Eng. Ahmed Fawzy, the project manager of the airport, highlighted three key features of the airport: compactness, smooth transfer, and welcoming space. Its compact size makes it efficient for the passengers. Approximately 90 % of customers are business persons, mostly Egyptians. "They come fast and leave fast," said Fawzy. To further enhance the airport's transfer capacity, it is now partly renovating the transit passenger's route in accordance with the findings by the airport staff on the passengers' movement line. This is part of the KAIZEN spirit which the airport staff learned upon taking a training in Japan. KAIZEN literally means 'improvement' in the Japanese language, but as a concept it is rather a mindset for constant improvement and enthusiasm for better quality. The concept is the most common feature in every single Japanese company. Another feature is the welcoming space. "It is in the Egyptian tradition that family members often see-off and welcome the travelers," said Fawzy. The airport has a cafeteria in the upper floor next to the arrival luggage pick-up area so that people can wait and see their arriving family members through the partition glass.

For a traveller, whether on business or vacation, an airport is often a fascinating place that stirs excitement for each destination and upcoming event. As for this airport, with the surrounding area of development and its constant improvement spirit, it might create more excitement for the customers in future.



What's inside

- Grand Egyptian Museum
- Lessons from Indonesia
- Essay contest ceremony
- Early Child Education

JICA Egypt NEWS

JICA Egypt News is a bimonthly news letter covering Japan's involvement in, and its perspectives on, international development. It details the work of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Egypt, which is a bilateral donor agency providing various forms of assistance in over 150 countries around the world.

Editors

Mr. Masaki Kudo, Representative, JICA Egypt
Ms. Menna Taher, PR Adviser, JICA Egypt

Contact us

Egypt Office

World Trade Center 8th Floor, 1191 Corniche El Nil Street, Boulak, Cairo
Tel 02-2574-8240 Fax 02-2574-8243



The Grand Egyptian Museum: JICA's much-anticipated project

Ancient Egyptian monuments constitute a big part of the remains of ancient civilizations, therefore are not only important to Egyptians but the whole world. One would expect that such valuable monuments are preserved with the utmost care and displayed through the most advanced equipment that would accentuate their grandiose, but the reality is far different.

However, a museum expected to be constructed in 2015, will give the artifacts their much-needed care. The Grand Egyptian Museum, which will be located in the vicinity of the pyramids, is planned to be the biggest museum in Egypt. The 117 acre building will contain 100 thousand antiquity pieces displayed by the newest technological equipment of showcasing and lighting.

JICA is playing a big role in the realization of the museum. It is funding around \$ 350 million on the construction of the museum through soft loans, and is overseeing the technical side of the museum's conservation centre (GEM-CC).

Some of JICA's activities in the GEM-CC are holding trainings in different areas of conservation and the annual symposium which offers a platform for conservators in Egypt and worldwide to exchange their knowledge. The 2nd symposium titled "Conservation in Museums: Present and Future" was held from 18-19 March and targeted an international audience. It is a step forward from the 1st symposium, which was targeted at a local base.

"The first symposium was an introduction to the conservation centre," said JICA's representative, Tatsuya Yanagi, "while in the second one more issues, like technical developments, were discussed."

"During the symposium, GEM-CC employees shared knowledge gained through the daily experiences and benefited from archeologists and Egyptologists worldwide," Yanagi added.

Two researchers from Japan and Hungary were also invited and spent two weeks to exchange knowledge. According to Yasunori Matsuda, the technical chief advisor in conservation, they were very helpful.

"The Hungarian expert assisted GEM-CC employees in the research on the conservation of the Khufu boat," he explained. In the upcoming years, the symposium is expected to become a bigger event and to present more papers by the GEM-CC staff. Targeting an international base and expanding the symposium would help the GEM-CC in realizing its aim to become the leading cultural preservation centre in the whole region of the Middle East.

A number of technical trainings provided by JICA help supporting that goal. Around 500 trainings were conducted with each employee taking at least one. Now, the GEM-CC has 116 trained employees.

Hossam el din Rashed, head of the heavy artifact conservation site, talked to JICA about the third training held for heavy artifacts at the conservation centre from 5 till 17 February.

Rashed stated that the training is a continuation of the first two. The first training revolved around the general idea of the worker's health and safety and the basics of preserving and moving artifacts. The second training concentrated on the tools, with which artifacts are moved. He explained that with each training, employees learn to move artifacts with bigger weight.

"This [third] training is enabling them to carry around 5 tons and move it 360 degrees," he said, adding that the trainees are now qualified of handling the artifacts but not moving them.

Currently, 10 thousand pieces were already moved to the GEM, most importantly the Ramses II statue made out of granite. As for the biggest artifact yet to be moved, is the granite obelisk in Sharqeya, which would need big equipment of an expert logistic company like Nippon Express.

Ahmed Oraby, one of the conservationists taking the training had previously worked at the Tahrir Square Egyptian Museum. He admitted that workers there were not trained and in consequence scratched the surface of the monuments in the process of moving or handling artifacts. He added that all the work was done manually at the old museum.



Trainees learning how to move and handle heavy artifacts

Another training in textiles took place from 14 till 23 April, by the visiting researcher of Tokyo National Institute for Cultural Heritage, Mie Ishii.

"The course is a high-level one compared to the previous courses," Ishii explained, adding that "as professional young conservators they are currently in the intermediate level." Highlighting the importance of ancient Egyptian textiles Ishii noted that they are "the oldest remaining textiles in the world dating back to 5000 B.C." "It tells us the textile technologies from the ancient times," she continued.

The current conservation work is concentrated on items to be displayed at the museum. The collection includes a number of valuable artifacts like the Tut Akh Amoun belongings and will contribute greatly to Egyptian culture and tourism. This "grand project" is one of JICA's most important in Egypt.



Instructor Mie Ishii during her textile training



Economic lessons of Indonesia's post-revolution success story



JICA has been assisting Egypt in creating the "Strategic Framework for Economic and Social Development Plan" through the consultation of its Economy expert Naruo Shinji. To discuss the outcomes of the master plan and share the experience of other countries, a seminar titled "Global Knowledge-sharing of Inclusive Development and Planning" was held on 18 and 19 February. During the seminar, planning experts from Indonesia and Turkey offered their insight on planning strategies and economic recovery experiences. One of the speakers, Tb. A. Choesni, the Director of International Cooperation - Ministry of National Development Planning (BAPPENAS) in Indonesia talked to JICA about Indonesia's tough but fruitful road towards economic reform.

JICA: What was the biggest challenge in Indonesia's recovery process?

Choesni: In 1998 [after the downfall of Suharto], Indonesia's GDP faced a negative 13.4%. Political change was very drastic, and inflation was soaring. It was a very bad time.

During that time, governance was not good and there was no capital outflow. There was a need to improve the governance and that is why the political movement united after the crisis. In 2004 a president was elected directly by the people and the constitution was revised. Suharto had the pendulum on the extreme right and suddenly the pendulum was released.

JICA: What can Egypt learn from the Indonesian experience?

Choesni: One lesson learned is that Egypt should look at what it can and cannot do. The 'one size fits all' doesn't work. Egyptian economy is facing different factors. The process of the reform plan in Indonesia required consultation with many agencies including the IMF.

However, it was not always fruitful. As for the Economic plan, its implementation requires

democracy. In Indonesia we are still learning the democratic process.

JICA: It seems that during the presentation, the idea of decentralizing Indonesia has caught the interest of many. Could you elaborate on the decentralization of Indonesia?

Choesni: Because of Indonesia's scattered geographical situation, the ultimate objective was to ensure the service delivery. However, some of [the decentralization] benefits were to accommodate localities, listen to more local objectives, improve the service and move the authority to the nearest place to the people. Another important factor is self-service, such as the One Village One Product model that we are currently implementing in Indonesia.

JICA: What are the problems that you could face applying this system?

Choesni: A problem that may arise is the conflicting agenda of the elected governor and national authority.

One national agenda must be considered when we prepare the planning and for this to be achieved, all governors meet in Jakarta annually for the upcoming fiscal year.

JICA: How did the decentralization affect the economic growth?

Choesni: The development process will be smoother when everyone agrees. Economic activities were at first taking place extensively in the affluent area of Java, however, after decentralization, growth reached different provinces in Indonesia. The concept itself is not new. It was already in the 1945 constitution. However, it only got implemented in 1999. Decentralization requires capacity building and regional planning.

JICA: What about Indonesia's political situation?

Choesni: After Suharto's downfall there were 50 political parties, while during his reign there were only three. Now that the democratic system got strengthened, only 10 parties are competing in the next elections. There is a Commission for General Elections that follows a number of criteria to determine whether a political party is suitable to run in elections or not.

JICA: How is Indonesia battling corruption?

Choesni: Corruption has not been obliterated completely. However, we are eliminating it through public participation. There is a whistle-blowing system, with which corruption is uncovered. And we are also making the bureaucratic process more efficient for citizens by clearly writing out the procedural steps in detail and hanging them on the wall to eliminate bribes. That way citizens would know exactly what to do and how much time it should take them to do it. In accordance, they would not resort to bribing thinking that this would make the bureaucratic process much faster.

JICA: What do you think of the presentations by the Turkish participants? Do you feel there are lessons to be learned from that experience?

Choesni: The surroundings are quite different. However, the FDI is good for Indonesia, we could learn how they did it since we are still not very good in the business climate.

JICA: What is your message to Egyptians?

Choesni: Indonesia is still learning and it cannot afford to stop learning. National interest should always be emphasized.