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Peacebuilding Toward a Conflict-Free Society

Peacebuilding

Toward a Conflict-Free Society



There are multiple armed conflicts being waged around the world today, sparked by issues like disparity of wealth and political representation, ethnic strife, and regional economic decline. This fighting results in the destruction of basic infrastructure, collapse of political systems, economic stagnation, and declines in public safety. The effects of war have extended far beyond combat zones, robbing both

embattled and neighboring areas of the ability to achieve national and regional development.

Countries and regions in the developing world struggling with poverty and other dire issues are the main centers of conflict. Most suffer from weakened political systems and lack the capacity to build lasting peace. According to a 2003 World Bank study, even when fighting ends, conflict resumes within five years in over 40% of cases.



Using its own experience of rebuilding from war, Japan is working to prevent armed confrontation and to promote peace by offering developmental support that addresses economic and political disparities, along with other factors contributing to conflict. These Japanese efforts have included projects to promote the creation and maintenance of essential social infrastructure, as well as education of the human resources

needed to guide the development of conflict areas.

JICA has supported a variety of peacebuilding projects with a view to the reconstruction of social and economic capital, rebuilding of governance systems, and security enhancement. This issue of *JICA's World* features mid- to long-term JICA programs and projects currently underway to realize peace in war-torn regions.

PHOTO: MASATAKA OTSUKA



Supporting Peace and Development in Mindanao

In March 2014, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Philippine government came to the end of a conflict that had simmered on the southern island of the Philippines for over 40 years. With a peace agreement concluded, efforts to rebuild war-torn areas have begun. One part of these efforts has been the development of institutions and training of administrators to serve as the core of a new political entity slated to begin in 2016. JICA, which began assistance efforts in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao in the latter half of the 1990s, has continued to provide support as residents work to realize lasting peace and development.

THE SCARS OF FOUR DECADES OF CONFLICT

Travelers passing through the domestic terminal at Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport will notice a unique atmosphere surrounding one particular gate. The Philippines is mostly Christian, but the women at this gate—clad in headscarves and long black robes—are Muslim. The plane they board will take them to Cotabato City on the island of Mindanao, about an hour and a half from Manila.

Mindanao is the second largest of the country's over 7,000 islands—only Luzon, where the capital of Manila is located, is bigger. It is also the site of a bitter conflict waged for over 40 years.

The history of Mindanao is complex. Prior to the sixteenth century, most areas of the island were occupied by Muslim people. Christianity became an influential force when the Philippines became a Spanish, and later American, colony. This religious influence continued after independence as Christians from other islands streamed into the area, often driving out Muslim residents, taking their land and even at times their lives. Robbed of their livelihood and safety, residents chose to take up arms against the government in a fight for independence. Since the first shots were fired in the 1970s, it is believed the conflict has claimed hundreds of thousands of victims.

In 1996, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), one of several armed groups involved in the struggle, signed a peace agreement with the Philippine government, assuming leadership of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. But MILF, seeking the right to self-determination as an Islamic independent body, broke with the MNLF and continued the struggle.

JAPANESE-BACKED PEACE EFFORTS

Forging a peaceful resolution has been a tall challenge, as both sides have stood firm in their beliefs that what they were fighting for was right. Amid these perilous conditions, Japan stepped in to support the peace process between the government and revolutionary forces. A major motivating factor was a special kinship Japan felt with Mindanao, which prior to World War II had been home to some 20,000 Japanese.



Amid ongoing tensions, Japanese IMT member Takayuki Nakagawa (left) visits an opposition outpost in 2013 to bring together government army and MILF officers.

When the Philippine government and MNLF reached a peace agreement in 1996, Japan was one of the first countries to provide assistance toward reconstruction efforts in Mindanao. Since 2006, Japan has been involved in supporting efforts in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao to build peace between the national government and MILF. This has included participation on the International Monitoring Team (IMT) in Mindanao as well as assistance for the Japan-Bangsamoro Initiatives for Reconstruction and Development (J-BIRD), a unique set of programs providing a wide variety of socioeconomic assistance to local residents.

The IMT is an international body with participants from Brunei, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Norway. Its four divisions monitor security, humanitarian aid, socioeconomic assistance, and civilian protection, with the primary goal of ensuring that the terms of the peace agreement are being upheld. The multinational makeup of IMT has served to reduce skirmishes by providing international pressure to keep the Philippine government and MILF on the road to peace.

Until the peace agreement was reached, tensions over the decades of conflict ran high, with one past Philippine president even vowing utter destruction of rebels. But it was President Benigno S. Aquino III who made peace in Mindanao a priority, citing the importance of stability to the entire country. With the support of the international community, the both sides in the conflict were able to turn this last stab at peace into a reality.

GROUNDWORK FOR THE NEW POLITICAL ENTITY

Work is now underway to establish a new Bangsamoro Government in 2016. The creation of this new political entity first requires the Bangsamoro Basic Law to be drafted and then passed by the Philippine legislature.

JICA expert Shinichi Masuda has been closely involved with the interim authority Bangsamoro Transition Commission (BTC) and Bangsamoro

PHOTO: MASATAKA OTSUKA



JICA expert Shinichi Masuda (left) visits a rural village to observe development work.

PHOTO: MASATAKA OTSUKA



A banner reads "Greetings to the Bangsamoro Government."



A local peace volunteer tells Hiroshima University training program participants about the city's experience of rebuilding after war.

Development Authority (BDA), supporting such efforts as the development of institutions and policies for the new government, administrator training, and establishment of basic services. "This is a completely new process for MILF," says Masuda. "It will be a real test to see if those involved can create an effective, if not an ideal, autonomous government."

BTC member Norodin Salam has high expectations, saying, "We want to create a highly autonomous government that supports not just Muslims but also Christians and indigenous people in the region. We hope to learn from Japan's experience of rebuilding from nothing after World War II." According to Masuda, the peacebuilding process is best served through efforts to enhance the livelihood of people. "No matter what obstacle may stand in the way, the process must keep moving forward. Even the smallest steps are vital."

Hiroshima University, which has unremittingly shared a message of peace with the world, will also provide support to the new Bangsamoro Government. As part of a JICA grass-roots technical assistance program, Assistant Professor Meg Kagawa of its Graduate School of Social Sciences is involved in training to turn young local leaders into future administrators.

In some parts of Mindanao, the strong regional influence of various groups and clans has stifled

local governmental efforts. To address this issue, 30 individuals from Mindanao have been invited to Japan for one month during the three years of the project period to study the structure and developmental approaches of local authorities in Hiroshima, in addition to learning about the city's experience of rebuilding after war.

One local staff member, who works with Kagawa in the Philippines, has high expectations for the program: "I want the young participants to become a force for change by sharing the knowledge that they gain in Japan on local government operations with others in Mindanao."

RAISING THE STANDARD OF LIVING

Establishing a peace agreement will have little meaning unless residents in the region can hope for a better future. To this end, JICA is involved in assistance for various programs to help ensure lasting peace in Mindanao.

These efforts include support for small infrastructure projects in over 300 villages in the region. One such example can be found an hour's drive from the regional capital of Cotabato City, in the coastal village of Kusiong. In the center of the village is an open area where rice and other crops produced by residents are sun-dried. "At the moment



Children of all faiths come to learn at the school in Kusiong. The schoolhouse was constructed with Japanese assistance.

we are drying coconut,” explains one villager. “When it’s ready, we’ll press it for oil.”

The lively sounds of children at school provide another example of these efforts. On the schoolroom wall hangs a yearly schedule listing important Muslim and Christian holidays. Smiling, a teacher explains: “The children, even those from indigenous families, celebrate all the events. We live together peacefully, no matter what our beliefs are.” Sharing the task of tending to the village’s infrastructure builds cohesion by bringing residents together for a common good.

JICA’s support extends beyond just infrastructure assistance. For Mindanao, which lacks major industry, there is a strong need to develop ways for residents to earn income. In Solon, a village in the municipality of Sultan Mastura, JICA experts are providing support to residents in their efforts to farm tilapia, a type of freshwater fish.

“It has been trial and error, but we’ve started to earn a profit,” says one member of a group of smiling villagers. “People from other villages even come to learn about our operation.” At a training facility in the village of Macabico, residents learn from a JICA expert how to make organic fertilizer. This knowledge is being applied toward growing tomatoes and other vegetable crops. Productivity is up, signaling a brighter future for the village.

Greenhouses and other technology help local tomato farmers protect their crops from the strong Philippine sun.



“Initially, assistance must be organic efforts to help people meet their basic needs,” says Mohammad Yacob, executive director of the Bangsamoro Development Agency. As the situation improves, the next step of development is investment. Yacob has high hopes for the region. “Mindanao is rich in resources and fertile land. We hope many companies, including those from Japan, will see what we have and come here. New industries make new jobs, which helps the region develop.”

The decades of conflict have driven poverty rates in southwest and central Mindanao to levels well above the national average. Insufficiencies in basic social services and infrastructure are also challenges that must be overcome. JICA is determined to continue tackling these issues until the day comes when each resident in Mindanao can live in peace, free from the scourge of armed conflict.



Sasaki (third from left) holds a hearing with villagers about installation of a water supply point.

Improving Côte d'Ivoire's Conflict-Scarred Public Services

After gaining independence from France in 1960, Côte d'Ivoire enjoyed consistent economic development and was considered an African success story. In the 1990s, though, the country was divided by a conflict over the presidency, after which the central and northern areas controlled by antigovernment forces did not receive education, healthcare, water supply, and other basic administrative services.

After the civil war ended in 2011 the country began walking the road to recovery, but public services remain inadequate even three years later. In the central and northern areas the primary school enrolment rate is 30%–50% and the completion rate 20%–30%, both below the national average, and education facilities damaged in the civil war have yet to be repaired. The lack of government services due to the war has also left 55% of water supply facilities in nonworking order.

RISK OF FLARE-UPS REMAINS

“If people can't feel improvement in everyday life, they will be suspicious of the government,” says JICA expert Hideyuki Sasaki. “If things go on like this, conflict might flare up again.” Sasaki, with over 30 years of regional development planning experience

in Asia and Africa, handles a project to strengthen local administration via human-resource development in the most affected Ivorian areas.

Côte d'Ivoire held nationwide local elections in April 2013, forming governments at both regional and communal levels. However, as Sasaki explains, “The local governments that manage public services have no money and administrative officials do not know how they can do their jobs. In other words, decentralization is not working effectively.” Elements of the centralized system remain, but the central government cannot fully grasp what is happening in the regions. Meanwhile, local governments continue to rely on subsidies from the center and cannot stand on their own two feet.

Without enhancement of local governments' capacity to provide administrative services through help from the central authorities and regional offices, the benefits of recovery will not reach regional areas. JICA viewed the training of local administrative officials as a pressing task in the realization of a peaceful society for people who live in these areas.

LIMITED POWER OF MUNICIPALITIES

“At first we found the country's regional administrative structure difficult to understand. We strug-



Children study in simply constructed school buildings (left). A shared water supply point for residents. Many villagers use old equipment that requires continual repair.

gled a lot,” recalls JICA expert Junko Okamoto, who oversees the project together with Sasaki.

In Japan, senior members of regional government are chosen by election. But in Côte d’Ivoire, although top politicians in communes are elected, leaders of regions and departments are appointed by the Ministry of Interior and Security. If the newly formed municipalities are not given sufficient power, then decentralization has not truly taken place.

In July 2014, administrative officials from the Ministry of Interior and Security, Ministry of Economic Infrastructure, and Ministry of National Education and Technical Education, as well as the governor of the region of Gbeke, the mayor of Bouaké, and other Côte d’Ivoire representatives, were invited to Japan to observe decentralized administrative structures in Japan first-hand.

DECENTRALIZATION: THE JAPAN MODEL

Among the municipalities selected for visiting were the city of Higashimurayama within the Tokyo metropolitan area and the provincial towns of Nanbu and Chizu in Tottori Prefecture. As well as observing the study environments of elementary school children, visitors saw—and showed surprise at the

high quality of—municipal services like garbage collection and water and sewer management. At one point, Gbala Gnato Raphael of the Ivorian Ministry of Interior and Security asked: “Are there any people appointed by the central government in this area?”

“No,” was the reply. In Japan, municipal mayors elected by the people have a measure of executive power and, rather than simply relying on central funding, collect taxes locally to provide administrative services. This painted a clear picture of Japanese decentralization for the Ivorian visitors.

“By seeing real-life examples of decentralization of power in Japan and looking at their own country from outside, they changed their way of thinking,” Okamoto smiles. Konin Aka, the governor of the Gbeke region, speaks vigorously on the task ahead: “To improve people’s lives, we need to pressure the central government to strengthen regional administration. That is our job.”

Construction and rehabilitation of new water supply points and schools will finally begin in the project areas in Côte d’Ivoire. Citizens in local communities will get involved by forming management committees for water supply and for schools. This will begin in the Gbeke region, with efforts to later spread to other areas.



Côte d’Ivoire officials observe a class at a Japanese elementary school (left). Gbeke governor Aka talking with children at lunchtime.



South-South Efforts to Reduce the Landmine and Unexploded Ordnance Threat

Landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) remain in the ground long after a conflict has come to a close, threatening the lives and wellbeing of people and impeding agricultural and economic development. JICA has provided aid in Cambodia for many years to remove landmines and is now drawing on this experience in developing similar programs in neighboring Laos.

REMOVING CAMBODIA'S LANDMINES

It has been over 20 years since the 1991 Paris Peace Agreement brought an end to Cambodia's long civil war. As a result of the conflict, nearly half of the country's agricultural settlements remain plagued by landmines and UXO. The removal of these threats and care for victims, along with other programs, falls to the Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC), a government agency established in 1992.

Since 1998, JICA has provided assistance to strengthen the capacity of CMAC. This has involved sending experts to provide technical assistance, helping procure metal detectors and heavy machinery to remove vegetation and ordnance from minefields, and facilitating procurement of materials like tents, communication equipment, and vehicles to strengthen logistical support systems.

For JICA, supporting demining and UXO removal, which require military knowledge, was a new challenge in an unfamiliar field. To ensure that landmines were removed safely and efficiently it was essential for CMAC to function properly. This meant providing assistance toward creating a stronger organization and workforce—two areas where JICA does have deep expertise.

The strong motivation of CMAC staff to improve the wellbeing of fellow Cambodians has been shared by Japanese experts involved in the project, who have provided instruction and other types of



UXO Lao members visit a minefield in Cambodia.



support to staff in such fields as information system technology and resource management. Thanks to the steady progress made by CMAC, Cambodia has seen a significant decrease in landmine victims.

Building on this success, CMAC has taken on the new challenge of providing assistance in other developing countries. CMAC's initial South-South cooperation effort, which JICA facilitated, took place in Colombia in 2010–11.

“The progress we made at home gave us confidence working in Colombia, which is economically better off than Cambodia,” says Oum Phmuro, deputy director general of CMAC. “There is nothing that gives us more pleasure than to be able to use our experience to help save lives in other countries.”

SUPPORT FOR UXO REMOVAL IN LAOS

New cooperation efforts have also begun in neighboring Laos. An estimated 2 million tons of ord-

nance were dropped on Laos during the Viet Nam War, making the country, per capita, the most heavily bombed nation in the world.

“Unlike landmines, the unexploded ordnance does not usually detonate when stepped on,” says Akihito Hayashi, a JICA expert working with the Lao National Unexploded Ordnance Programme (UXO Lao), which heads the country's UXO-clearing efforts. “And it is not unusual to find it in places where children play.”

Experts estimate that around 80 million pieces of UXO remain in Laos. The lack of data on the location and quantity of these potentially deadly explosives has made it difficult for authorities to establish which areas deserve priority, hampering clearance efforts. This has impeded both regional development and efforts to improve the quality of life of residents.

To address this issue, JICA has provided project assistance in Laos for joint training workshops with UXO Lao and CMAC participation. Under the program, six workshops lasting up to two weeks each are to be held over a three-year period. Workshops are run under a broad range of themes, such as human resource development, information management, victim support, and organization management, with both organizations having the opportunity to share results of their efforts as well as to visit sites in each country.

The five workshops that have been held to date have already begun to yield results. As Hayashi notes, “I've begun to hear the name CMAC crop up during UXO Lao meetings. Members are thinking about how best to apply the information they've gained to the situation in Laos. This shows the strong trust that has developed between the two organizations.” The need for trust is emphasized by Phmuro, who says, “By working together, we can build peace and stability in the region.”

With JICA's assistance, Laos will soon receive four heavy-duty brush-cutting machines. Landmines and UXO are often buried deep below vegetation and the introduction of equipment to clear sites is expected to improve efficiency of removal efforts. Training for operators, development of a SOP (standard operation procedure), and other practical instruction is taking place in Cambodia. Looking ahead, an issue to be tackled from here on out is how best to utilize land once it has been cleared of landmines and UXO.

JICA will continue working to help residents eradicate the terror of landmines and unexploded ordnance by assisting the South-South cooperation between Cambodia and Laos.

JICA expert Akihito Hayashi and UXO Lao staff exchange opinions during a clearance operation (left). A Japanese brush-cutting machine in Cambodia. Clearing vegetation used to consume 70% of resources in UXO operations, but the introduction of brush removal equipment has greatly improved efficiency.



A CMAC mine risk education workshop. Cooperation and understanding by local residents is essential to UXO removal efforts. CMAC has also extended its South-South efforts to Angola.

A man in a dark suit and glasses is kneeling outdoors, working on a large solar panel. He is holding a red multimeter and looking at it intently. The background shows a plain, light-colored wall.

Osama Al Najjar

Palestine

Director of Renewable Energy
at the Palestinian Energy Authority

Like roughly 70% of residents of the Gaza Strip, Osama Al Najjar of the Palestinian Energy Authority is a refugee. He spent his earliest years in a camp in Gaza after his family was forced to leave land owned by his grandfather.

Gaza is heavily reliant on Israel for its energy needs. Electricity is in short supply and blackouts are daily occurrences, making energy self-sufficiency a critical issue in Palestinian efforts toward establishing an independent state. To address this issue, the authorities are looking to renewable energy.

In 2011, Najjar followed up earlier ideas of introducing solar energy to Gaza by taking part in a JICA-supported training program providing solar technology to developing countries. Training sessions held in Japan's Kansai region focused on expanding participants' practical knowledge of solar energy through activities including visits to megasolar sites, factories producing batteries for solar systems, and home manufacturers.

"Gaza's abundant sunshine can be transformed into electricity, stored, and used when conventional sources stop," says Najjar. "With the training I received in Japan I came to understand that introducing small-scale systems would work efficiently here. I also learned the importance Japan places on perseverance. It's important to keep pushing ahead, no matter what barriers stand in the way." He added that he was honored to be mentioned at the UN General Assembly in September 2014 by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Since going back to Gaza, Najjar has worked on a project supplying photovoltaic (PV) electricity to the intensive care unit at Gaza's largest hospital as a JICA follow-up project involving participants in the training program. The PV unit started its operation before conflict broke out in Gaza in 2014 and helped many people's lives in a time of great turmoil, when all of Gaza was under blackout as the power plant and the feeders from the Israeli side were destroyed.

A wide-angle photograph of a refugee camp. In the foreground, there are several tents and a clothesline with laundry hanging. In the background, there are rows of white UNHCR containers and more tents. The ground is dry and dusty.

Restoring Peace to Society

The scars of armed conflict continue to impact the lives of countless people, destroying their livelihood and forcing them to live in impoverished, desolate conditions. In this section we profile three individuals who are working to bring peace back to conflict-ravaged lands.

The breakup of the former Yugoslavia sparked an ethnically driven conflict in Bosnia Herzegovina

that killed 200,000 and displaced over 2 million. In Srebrenica, the fighting was so vicious that even now, nearly two decades later, the population of the city has only recovered to roughly 40% of its prewar level. Tensions and mistrust among Muslim Bosniaks and Serbs have prevented the country from pursuing development effectively. In 2006–13, JICA experts provided assistance for agricultural programs in Srebrenica that looked to promote cross-ethnic cooperation in rebuilding communities and improving the livelihood of residents.

In 2014, in response to a request from Bosnia Herzegovina, a new project headed by JICA expert Hiroki Miyoshi was launched to extend the results seen in Srebrenica to neighboring Bratunac and Rogatica. As in Srebrenica, JICA is providing support for beekeeping, orchard development, sheep farming, and other agricultural programs with the goal of promoting cooperation among different ethnic groups in community-building efforts.

“The project looks to gradually build trust among ethnic groups by giving residents a wide variety of opportunities to come together and work side by side,” explains Miyoshi. “Our goal is to have city officials carry on these efforts after JICA’s involvement in the project is completed. To help facilitate this, we are enlisting the cooperation of not only farmers but also administrators from each of the cities.”



Hiroki Miyoshi

Bosnia Herzegovina

JICA Expert



Kozue Misumi

Syrian Refugee Camp in Jordan

Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer

Since 2011, Syrians fleeing their country’s civil war have continued to flood into neighboring Jordan. The kingdom, which has a population of roughly 6.3 million, is now host to over 600,000 refugees. Roughly 80,000 live at the Zaatari refugee camp, which is located 15 kilometers from the Syrian border in northern Jordan.

Kozue Misumi, a member of JICA’s Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, has worked at the camp since January 2014. Misumi developed a deep fondness for the Syrian people when volunteering as a physical education instructor at a Palestinian refugee camp in Syria prior to the civil war. She was inspired to come to the Zaatari refugee camp out of a desire to help ease the

hardship of the refugees living there. Currently, Misumi regularly visits six facilities in the camp, where, among other work, she runs activities providing emotional support and comfort to children.

“We dance, make origami and crafts, and play games with the children to help ease the emotional pain and stress they feel,” explains Misumi. “They have had to endure so much. It’s therapeutic for them to be able to play and laugh out loud. Through my work the children have come to trust me. They’ve begun to open up and share what they have been through. As I listen I hold their hands, wipe their tears, and hug them. They face a harsh reality and there’s nothing that gives me more pleasure than to help ease their burden, even if only slightly.”

Peacebuilding and Forced Displacement

António Guterres
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Over 51 million persons worldwide are forcibly displaced due to conflict and persecution, including refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs). This number has increased exponentially in recent years as a result of multiplying crises that have challenged the limits of humanitarian response capacity. Recent emergencies from Syria to South Sudan to the Sahel have seen entire populations upended, with devastating consequences.

As the number of forcibly displaced persons has grown, host countries and communities are increasingly affected. The contribution they make to the protection of refugees and IDPs is fundamental, but as their capacities are often limited, this poses enormous challenges. Nearly nine out of ten refugees worldwide are hosted in developing countries, which are often already struggling to provide adequate services to their own populations. This highlights the importance of programs that not only address the humanitarian needs of the displaced but also foster self-reliance and peaceful co-existence between affected communities. It also underlines the need for peacebuilding, notably in countries and regions of origin that are affected by conflict, so as to lay the foundation for the sustainable voluntary return and reintegration of the displaced.

Since 1999, UNHCR and JICA have been addressing these challenges in partnership, utilizing their respective expertise to help build peace and enable durable solutions for refugees and internally displaced persons.

Afghanistan is a prime example. With returnees making up some 20% of the total Afghan population, including their needs in national plans is fundamental to achieving long-term peace and development. Since 2001, the government of Japan and JICA have invested some \$5.395 billion in Official Development Assistance for the reconstruction of socio-economic infrastructure and capacity building for tens of thousands of Afghans. JICA leveraged UNHCR's knowledge and experience in selecting the geographic locations for these funds, so as to ensure the inclusion of returnees and their communities and support sustainable reintegration.

Our partnership also brings tangible dividends in on-going

refugee emergencies. In Jordan, JICA provided ¥24.234 billion (approximately \$240 million) in ODA loans to the government, so as to alleviate the financial burden created by the massive influx of Syrian refugees. In addition, JICA invested ¥2.51 billion (some \$25 million) of grant aid for water facilities in host communities. These were selected in conjunction with UNHCR, complementing efforts to promote peaceful coexistence between host communities and refugees. JICA volunteers are also working actively with UNHCR partner NGOs to assist refugees and host communities across Jordan.

In another example in Uganda, JICA and UNHCR implemented a joint training program on rice promotion for hundreds of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, aimed at helping them to become self-sufficient. Projects like these recognize the crucial importance of fostering self-reliance from the very beginning of a refugee emergency.

At a time when growing displacement, multiplying crises, and the increasingly protracted nature of many refugee and IDP situations is straining the humanitarian system, close partnerships with development actors are crucially important in ensuring an adequate response. JICA's understanding of the need for early intervention, innovative burden sharing, and support for peacebuilding in displacement crises makes the agency a key partner for organizations like UNHCR. Its expertise, funding, and longer-term perspective as a development actor crucially contribute to the

success of our collective efforts to address the needs of refugees, internally displaced persons, and the communities hosting them.

Fifteen years after JICA and UNHCR began its collaboration, the experience and knowledge sharing that have grown out of our long-standing partnership make it a catalyst in bringing development and humanitarian actors closer together. It is my sincere hope that our organizations will continue to benefit and learn from each other, and that we can further expand our shared commitment to building peace and achieving durable solutions for the people we care for.



TRENDS



Ebola Training for Police in Côte d'Ivoire



In response to the growing outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, JICA has provided emergency assistance to Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. It is also working to halt the spread of the disease by providing technical cooperation in neighboring countries and promoting understanding of the disease.

In Côte d'Ivoire, which has no recognized cases of Ebola, it is important to increase public awareness and strengthen border control to prevent the disease from entering the country. It is therefore crucial for police officers handling border patrol duties to collaborate with medical workers in quarantine centers to grasp infection situations among those crossing the border as well as domestic communities.

Police in Côte d'Ivoire learn how to use an infrared thermometer.

JICA, as part of the Project for Capacity Building for National Police of Côte d'Ivoire, is providing support to strengthen the capacity of police officers to prevent Ebola with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This includes conducting Ebola countermeasure training for 2,300 police officers at border police stations, airports, and harbors.

On September 29, the first training session was carried out at the police station in the Port of Abidjan. In addition to learning about the characteristics of Ebola and prevention measures, participants received practical training in initial response to a potential infection, securing residents' safety, and proper methods for wearing and removing protective clothing.

"I confirmed the role the police play in preventing Ebola from entering the country," said one officer participating in the training.



Support for Master's Degrees and Internships for African Youth



At the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development in 2013, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced support for the African Business Education Initiative for Youth (ABE Initiative). Under the initiative, JICA has launched a program supporting African youths to study for master's degrees at Japanese universities and participate in internships at domestic companies. Through 2017, JICA will accept 900 participants in four groups. The first group of 156 arrived in Japan from Ethiopia, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Sudan, Tanzania, South Africa, Mozambique, and Rwanda on September 7 and 15.

JICA conducted an orientation program in Tokyo, offering instruction in basic Japanese

Participants in the ABE Initiative listen to a lecture on Japanese culture.

and such topics as Japanese culture and the status of Japanese companies doing business in Africa. Participants visited various companies, as well as production floors, distribution centers, and other locations. One Ethiopian expressed his strong impression, saying, "I want to build a network with many Japanese companies and universities to bring their knowledge to Ethiopia."

Participants have since entered master's programs at 48 universities, where they will study for about two years. Main areas of study include engineering, economics, management, agriculture, political science, public policy, and information and communications technology. During summer vacations and after completing their studies, they will participate in internship programs at Japanese companies ranging from two weeks to six months.



Teaming Up with the Private Sector to Conserve Forests



In recent years, extreme weather conditions like torrential rain and drought have been regularly recorded around the world, raising concerns of global climate change. One program addressing this issue that has garnered broad international attention is REDD+ (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation), an initiative to mitigate climate change by preventing forest destruction in developing countries.

JICA for many years has supported forest conservation efforts in developing countries. These have included programs to develop forest monitoring systems and involve local residents in conservation efforts. JICA is now laying the groundwork for REDD+ programs in 11 coun-

Private-sector companies are taking part in forestation activities.

tries, including Brazil, Indonesia, and Viet Nam. Japan's private sector has also begun to provide REDD+ support. In August 2013, JICA entered a partnership with Sumitomo Forestry to assist forest conservation efforts in Dien Bien Province of Viet Nam. Since then, Askul and Yanmar have also joined the partnership.

With JICA assistance, the first ever Dien Bien Provincial REDD+ Action Plan was approved in May 2014. The action plan looks to conserve forests in the province, one of Viet Nam's poorest, by lowering reliance on slash-and-burn farming and diversifying livelihoods of residents. The plan also involves residents in conservation efforts, such as forest patrols and reforestation. Partner companies are providing financial assistance in four villages to enhance the livelihoods of residents and conservation activities.

Voices

F R O M T H E F I E L D

David Ajang

Assistant Accountant, JICA South Sudan Office



David Ajang spent many years of his life living in refugee camps after being forced as a schoolboy to flee the civil war in his native South Sudan. “In 1987 I went to Ethiopia as a refugee,” explains Ajang. “There I started school again, but in 1991 fighting broke out and I fled to Kenya.” It was at schools at Kenya’s Kakuma refugee camp that Ajang completed his primary and secondary education.

Ajang returned to his native land in 2005 after a comprehensive peace agreement ended fighting. Back home, he continued his studies, earning a diploma in public administration in 2010. His first experience with JICA was in 2011, when he was working with a German ODA organization. “I was impressed by JICA’s activities in Juba,” he notes, “especially the renovation of the city’s service training center and the campaign for solid waste management.” When Ajang saw an ad seeking an assistant accountant at the JICA South Sudan office, he applied immediately.

In his position, Ajang’s duties include following up on financial transactions at banks, communicating vital information to JICA administrators and project advisors. “My responsibilities mean I am involved with all the JICA projects in South Sudan,” he explains. In 2014 he won the JICA President Award for his diligent work in managing the South Sudan office in the absence of Japanese personnel.

Despite the challenges facing South Sudan, Ajang remains unwavering in his dedication to improving the situation there. Along with his duties at JICA, he is studying toward a business administration degree, focusing on accounting and finance. He hopes to use his financial know-how for a project training junior and senior officials in South Sudan. “We have resources, but managing them is a great challenge for the country.”

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Cover: A Cambodian child
with hands joined
together in prayer.
(Photo: Lonely Planet
Images/Getty Images)
Photo on pages 2-3:
Wounded ex-soldiers in
Rwanda participate in a
JICA technical training and
rehabilitation program.
(Photo: Atsushi Shibuya)



The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is the world’s largest bilateral development organization, operating in some 150 countries to help some of the globe’s most vulnerable people.